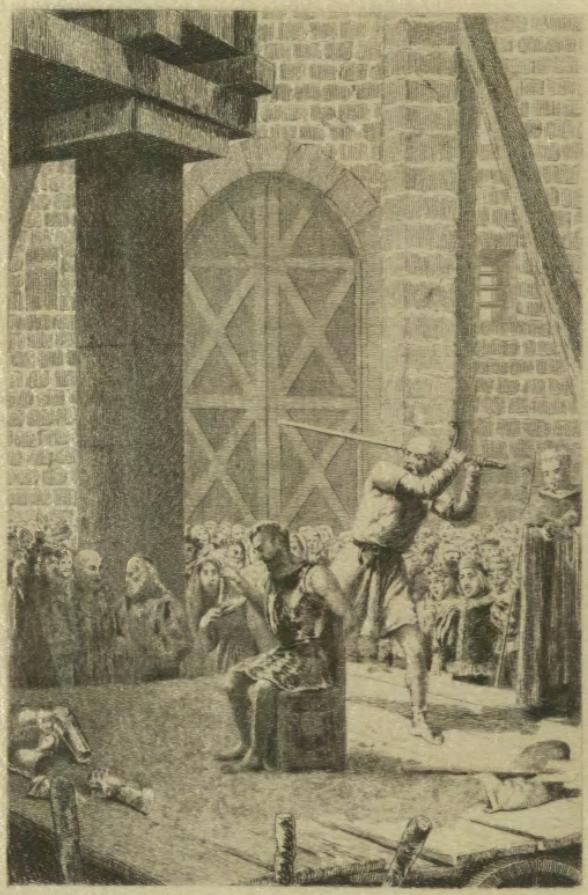

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NORNA DISPATCHING THE PROVISIONS.

NOSNA DISPATCHING THE PROVISIONS

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413

Drawn by W. Daniell from a sketch by the Marchioness of Stafford. Engraved by Edw. Finden.

The Hill of Hoy.

PIRATE.

London, Published Feby 1833 by Chapman & Hall, 62, Fleet St.

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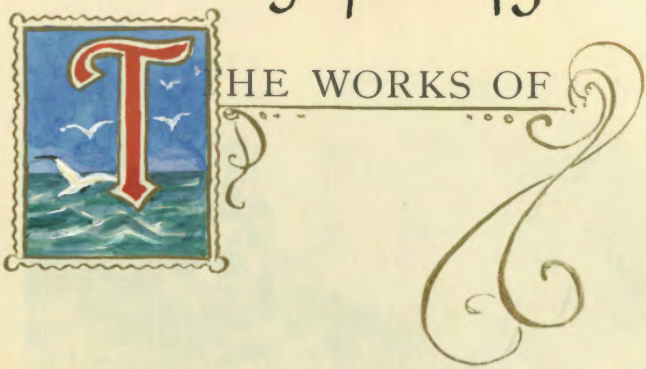

SIR WALTER SCOTT

The Pirate

Part II.

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CHAPTER XXII.

"There was a laughing devil in his sneer,
That raised emotions both of rage and fear;
And where his frown of hatred darkly fell,
Hope withering fled—and Mercy sigh'd farewell."

The Corsair, Canto I.

THE ling or white fishery is the principal employment of the natives of Zetland, and was formerly that upon which the gentry chiefly depended for their income, and the poor for their subsistence. The fishing season is therefore, like the harvest of an agricultural country, the busiest and most important, as well as the most animating period of the year.

The fishermen of each district assemble at particular stations, with their boats and crews, and erect upon the shore small huts, composed of shingle and covered with turf, for their temporary lodging, and skeos, or drying-houses, for the fish; so that the lonely beach at once assumes the appearance of an Indian town. The banks to which they repair for the Haaf fishing are often many miles distant from the station where the fish is dried; so that they are always twenty or thirty hours absent, frequently longer; and under unfavourable circumstances of wind and tide they remain at sea, with a very small stock of provisions, and in a boat of a construction which seems extremely slender, for two or three days, and are sometimes heard of no more. The departure of the fishers, therefore, on this occupation has in it a character of danger and of suffering which renders it dignified, and the anxiety of the females

who remain on the beach, watching the departure of the lessening boat, or anxiously looking out for its return, gives pathos to the scene.*

The scene, therefore, was in busy and anxious animation when the Udaller and his friends appeared on the beach. The various crews of about thirty boats, amounting each to from three to five or six men, were taking leave of their wives and female relatives, and jumping on board their long Norway skiffs, where their lines and tackle lay ready stowed. Magnus was not an idle spectator of the scene; he went from one place to another, inquiring into the state of their provisions for the voyage, and their preparations for the fishing—now and then, with a rough Dutch or Norse oath, abusing them for blockheads, for going to sea with their boats indifferently found, but always ending by ordering from his own stores a gallon of gin, a lispund of meal, or some similar essential addition to their sea-stores. The hardy sailors, on receiving such favours, expressed their thanks in the brief gruff manner which their landlord best approved; but the women were more clamorous in their gratitude, which Magnus was often obliged to silence by cursing all female tongues from Eve's downwards.

At length all were on board and ready, the sails were hoisted, the signal for departure given, the rowers began to pull, and all started from the shore, in strong emulation to get first to the fishing ground, and to have their lines set before the rest; an exploit to which no little consequence was attached by the boat's crew who should be happy enough to perform it.

While they were yet within hearing of the shore, they chanted an ancient Norse ditty, appropriate to the occasion, of which Claud Halcro had executed the following literal translation:—

"Farewell, merry maidens, to song, and to laugh,
For the brave lads of Westra are bound to the Haaf;
And we must have labour, and hunger, and pain,
Ere we dance with the maids of Dunrossness again.

"For now, in our trim boats of Noroway deal,
We must dance on the waves, with the porpoise and seal;
The breeze it shall pipe, so it pipe not too high,
And the gull be our songstress whene'er she flits by.

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* Dr. Edmonston, the ingenious author of a *View of the Ancient and Present State of the Zetland Islands*, has placed this part of the subject in an interesting light. "It is truly painful to witness the anxiety and distress which the wives of these poor men suffer on the approach of a storm. Regardless of fatigue, they leave their homes, and fly to the spot where they expect their husbands to land, or ascend the summit of a rock, to look out for them on the bosom of the deep. Should they get the glimpse of a sail, they watch, with trembling solicitude, its alternate rise and disappearance on the waves; and though often tranquillised by the safe arrival of the objects of their search, yet it sometimes is their lot 'to hail the bark that never can return.' Subject to the influence of a variable climate, and engaged on a sea naturally tempestuous, with rapid currents, scarcely a season passes over without the occurrence of some fatal accident or hairbreadth escape."—*Views, etc., of the Zetland Islands*, vol. i., p. 238. Many interesting particulars respecting the fisheries and agriculture of Zetland, as well as its antiquities, may be found in the work we have quoted.

"Sing on, my brave bird, while we follow, like thee,
By bank, shoal, and quicksand, the swarms of the sea;
And when twenty-score fishes are straining our line,
Sing louder, brave bird, for their spoils shall be thine.

"We'll sing while we bait, and we'll sing when we haul,
For the deeps of the Haaf have enough for us all:
There is torsk for the gentle, and stake for the carle,
And there's wealth for bold Magnus, the son of the earl.

"Huzza! my brave comrades, give way for the Haaf,
We shall sooner come back to the dance and the laugh;
For life without mirth is a lamp without oil;
Then, mirth and long life to the bold Magnus Troil!"

The rude words of the song were soon drowned in the ripple of the

"The fishermen's wives looked their last after the parting sails."

waves, but the tune continued long to mingle with the sound of wind and sea, and the boats were like so many black specks on the surface of the ocean, diminishing by degrees as they bore far and farther seaward; while the ear could distinguish touches of the human voice, almost drowned amid that of the elements.

The fishermen's wives looked their last after the parting sails, and were now departing slowly, with downcast and anxious looks, towards the huts in which they were to make arrangements for preparing and drying the fish, with which they hoped to see their husbands and friends return deeply laden. Here and there an old sibyl displayed the superior importance of her experience by predicting, from the appearance of the atmosphere, that the wind would be fair or foul, while others

recommended a vow to the Kirk of St. Ninian's, for the safety of their men and boats, an ancient Catholic superstition, not yet wholly abolished; and others, but in a low and timorous tone, regretted to their companions that Norna of Fitful Head had been suffered to depart in discontent that morning from Burgh-Westra, "and, of all days in the year, that they suld have contrived to give her displeasure on the first day of the white fishing!"

The gentry, guests of Magnus Troil, having whiled away as much time as could be so disposed of in viewing the little armament set sail, and in conversing with the poor women who had seen their friends embark in it, began now to separate into various groups and parties, which strolled in different directions, as fancy led them, to enjoy what may be called the clair-obscure of a Zetland summer day, which, though without the brilliant sunshine that cheers other countries during the fine season, has a mild and pleasing character of its own, that softens while it saddens landscapes, which, in their own lonely, bare, and monotonous tone, have something in them stern as well as barren.

In one of the loneliest recesses of the coast, where a deep indenture of the rocks gave the tide access to the cavern, or, as it is called, the *Helyer*, of Swartaster, Minna Troil was walking with Captain Cleveland. They had probably chosen that walk as being little liable to interruption from others; for, as the force of the tide rendered the place unfit either for fishing or sailing, so it was not the ordinary resort of walkers, on account of its being the supposed habitation of a Mermaid, a race which Norwegian superstition invests with magical as well as mischievous qualities. Here, therefore, Minna wandered with her lover.

A small spot of milk-white sand, that stretched beneath one of the precipices which walled in the creek on either side, afforded them space for a dry, firm, and pleasant walk of about a hundred yards, terminated at one extremity by a dark stretch of the bay, which, scarce touched by the wind, seemed almost as smooth as glass, and which was seen from between two lofty rocks, the jaws of the creek, or indenture, that approached each other above, as if they wished to meet over the dark tide that separated them. The other end of their promenade was closed by a lofty and almost unscaleable precipice, the abode of hundreds of sea-fowl of different kinds, in the bottom of which the huge helyer, or sea-cave, itself yawned, as if for the purpose of swallowing up the advancing tide, which it seemed to receive into an abyss of immeasurable depth and extent. The entrance to this dismal cavern consisted not in a single arch, as usual, but was divided into two, by a huge pillar of natural rock, which, rising out of the sea, and extending to the top of the cavern, seemed to lend its support to the roof, and thus formed a double portal to the helyer, on which the fishermen and peasants had bestowed the rude name of the Devil's Nostrils. In this wild scene, lonely and undisturbed but by the clang of the sea-fowl, Cleveland had already met with Minna Troil more than once; for with her it was a

favourite walk, as the objects which it presented agreed peculiarly with the love of the wild, the melancholy, and the wonderful. But now the conversation in which she was earnestly engaged was such as entirely to withdraw her attention, as well as that of her companion, from the scenery around them.

"You cannot deny it," she said; "you have given way to feelings respecting this young man which indicate prejudice and violence, the prejudice unmerited, as far as you are concerned at least, and the violence equally imprudent and unjustifiable."

"I should have thought," replied Cleveland, "that the service I rendered him yesterday might have freed me from such a charge. I do not talk of my own risk, for I have lived in danger, and love it; it is not every one, however, would have ventured so near the furious animal to save one with whom they had no connection."

"It is not every one, indeed, who could have saved him," answered Minna gravely; "but every one who has courage and generosity would have attempted it. The giddy-brained Claud Halcro would have done as much as you had his strength been equal to his courage; my father would have done as much, though having such just cause of resentment against the young man, for his vain and braggart abuse of our hospitality. Do not, therefore, boast of your exploit too much, my good friend, lest you should make me think that it required too great an effort. I know you love not Mordaunt Mertoun, though you exposed your own life to save his."

"Will you allow nothing, then," said Cleveland, "for the long misery I was made to endure from the common and prevailing report, that this beardless bird-hunter stood betwixt me and what I on earth coveted most—the affections of Minna Troil?"

He spoke in a tone at once impassioned and insinuating, and his whole language and manner seemed to express a grace and elegance which formed the most striking contrast with the speech and gesture of the unpolished seaman, which he usually affected or exhibited. But his apology was unsatisfactory to Minna.

"You have known," she said, "perhaps too soon, and too well, how little you had to fear,—if you indeed feared,—that Mertoun, or any other, had interest with Minna Troil. Nay, truce to thanks and protestations; I would accept it as the best proof of gratitude that you would be reconciled with this youth, or at least avoid every quarrel with him."

"That we should be friends, Minna, is impossible," replied Cleveland; "even the love I bear you, the most powerful emotion that my heart ever knew, cannot work that miracle."

"And why, I pray you?" said Minna. "There have been no evil offences between you, but rather an exchange of mutual services; why can you not be friends? I have many reasons to wish it."

"And can you, then, forget the slights which he has cast upon Brenda, and on yourself, and on your father's house?"

"I can forgive them all," said Minna; "can you not say so much, who have in truth received no offence?"

Cleveland looked down, and paused for an instant, then raised his head, and replied, "I might easily deceive you, Minna, and promise you what my soul tells me is an impossibility; but I am forced to use too much deceit with others, and with you I will use none. I cannot be friend to this young man; there is a natural dislike—an instinctive aversion—something like a principle of repulsion in our mutual nature, which makes us odious to each other. Ask himself; he will tell you he has the same antipathy against me. The obligation he conferred on me was a bridle to my resentment; but I was so galled by the restraint that I could have gnawed the curb till my lips were bloody."

"You have worn what you are wont to call your iron mask so long, that your features," replied Minna, "retain the impression of its rigidity even when it is removed."

"You do me injustice, Minna," replied her lover, "and you are angry with me because I deal with you plainly and honestly. Plainly and honestly, however, will I say that I cannot be Mertoun's friend; but it shall be his own fault, not mine, if I am ever his enemy. I seek not to injure him; but do not ask me to love him. And of this remain satisfied, that it would be vain even if I could do so; for as sure as I attempted any advances towards his confidence, so sure would I be to awaken his disgust and suspicion. Leave us to the exercise of our natural feelings, which, as they will unquestionably keep us as far separate as possible, are most likely to prevent any possible interference with each other. Does this satisfy you?"

"It must," said Minna, "since you tell me there is no remedy. And now tell me why you looked so grave when you heard of your consort's arrival, for that it is her I have no doubt in the port of Kirkwall?"

"I fear," replied Cleveland, "the consequences of that vessel's arrival with her crew, as comprehending the ruin of my fondest hopes. I had made some progress in your father's favour, and, with time, might have made more, when hither come Hawkins and the rest to blight my prospects for ever. I told you on what terms we parted. I then commanded a vessel braver and better found than their own, with a crew who, at my slightest nod, would have faced fiends armed with their own fiery element; but I now stand alone, a single man, destitute of all means to overawe or to restrain them; and they will soon show so plainly the ungovernable licence of their habits and dispositions, that ruin to themselves and to me will in all probability be the consequence."

"Do not fear it," said Minna; "my father can never be so unjust as to hold you liable for the offences of others."

"But what will Magnus Troil say to my own demerits, fair Minna?" said Cleveland, smiling.

"My father is a Zetlander, or rather a Norwegian," said Minna,

"one of an oppressed race, who will not care whether you fought against the Spaniards, who are the tyrants of the New World, or against the Dutch and English, who have succeeded to their usurped dominions. His own ancestors supported and exercised the freedom of the seas in those gallant barks, whose pennons were the dread of all Europe."

"I fear, nevertheless," said Cleveland, "that the descendant of an ancient Sea-King will scarce acknowledge a fitting acquaintance in a modern rover. I have not disguised from you that I have reason to dread the English laws; and Magnus, though a great enemy to taxes, imposts, scat, wattle, and so forth, has no idea of latitude upon points of a more general character; he would willingly reeve a rope to the yardarm for the benefit of an unfortunate buccaneer."

"Do not suppose so," said Minna; "he himself suffers too much oppression from the tyrannical laws of our proud neighbours of Scotland. I trust he will soon be able to rise in resistance against them. The enemy—such I will call them—are now divided amongst themselves, and every vessel from their coast brings intelligence of fresh commotions; the Highlands against the Lowlands, the Williamites against the Jacobites, the Whigs against the Tories, and, to sum the whole, the kingdom of England against that of Scotland. What is there, as Claud Halcro well hinted, to prevent our availing ourselves of the quarrels of these robbers, to assert the independence of which we are deprived?"

"To hoist the raven standard on the Castle of Scalloway," said Cleveland, in imitation of her tone and manner, "and proclaim your father Earl Magnus the First!"

"Earl Magnus the Seventh, if it please you," answered Minna; "for six of his ancestors have worn, or were entitled to wear, the coronet before him. You laugh at my ardour, but what *is* there to prevent all this?"

"Nothing *will* prevent it," replied Cleveland, "because it will never be attempted. Anything *might* prevent it that is equal in strength to the long-boat of a British man-of-war."

"You treat us with scorn, sir," said Minna; "yet yourself should know what a few resolved men may perform."

"But they must be armed, Minna," replied Cleveland, "and willing to place their lives upon each desperate adventure. Think not of such visions. Denmark has been cut down into a second-rate kingdom, incapable of exchanging a single broadside with England; Norway is a starving wilderness; and, in these islands, the love of independence has been suppressed by a long term of subjection, or shows itself but in a few muttered growls over the bowl and bottle. And, were your men as willing warriors as their ancestors, what could the unarmed crews of a few fishing-boats do against the British navy? Think no more of it, sweet Minna, it is a dream, and I must term it so, though it makes your eye so bright, and your step so noble."

"It is indeed a dream!" said Minna, looking down, "and it ill

becomes a daughter of Hialtland to look or to move like a freewoman. Our eye should be on the ground, and our step slow and reluctant, as that of one who obeys a taskmaster."

"There are lands," said Cleveland, "in which the eye may look bright upon groves of the palm and the cocoa, and where the foot may move light as a galley under sail, over fields carpeted with flowers, and savannahs surrounded by aromatic thickets, and where subjection is unknown, except that of the brave to the bravest, and of all to the most beautiful."

Minna paused a moment ere she spoke, and then answered, "No, Cleveland. My own rude country has charms for me, even desolate as you think it, and depressed as it surely is, which no other land on earth can offer to me. I endeavour in vain to represent to myself those visions of trees and of groves which my eye never saw; but my imagination can conceive no sight in nature more sublime than these waves, when agitated by a storm, or more beautiful than when they come, as they now do, rolling in calm tranquillity to the shore. Not the fairest scene in a foreign land, not the brightest sunbeam that ever shone upon the richest landscape, would win my thoughts for a moment from that lofty rock, misty hill, and wide-rolling ocean. Hialtland is the land of my deceased ancestors, and of my living father; and in Hialtland will I live and die."

"Then in Hialtland," answered Cleveland, "will I, too, live and die. I will not go to Kirkwall; I will not make my existence known to my comrades, from whom it were else hard for me to escape. Your father loves me, Minna. Who knows whether long attention, anxious care, might not bring him to receive me into his family? Who would regard the length of a voyage that was certain to terminate in happiness?"

"Dream not of such an issue," said Minna; "it is impossible. While you live in my father's house, while you receive his assistance and share his table, you will find him the generous friend and the hearty host; but touch him on what concerns his name and family, and the frank-hearted Udaller will start up before you the haughty and proud descendant of a Norwegian Jarl. See you; a moment's suspicion has fallen on Mordaunt Mertoun, and he has banished from his favour the youth whom he so lately loved as a son. No one must ally with his house that is not of untainted northern descent."

"And mine may be so, for aught that is known to me upon the subject," said Cleveland.

"How!" said Minna; "have you any reason to believe yourself of Norse descent?"

"I have told you before," replied Cleveland, "that my family is totally unknown to me. I spent my earliest days upon a solitary plantation in the little island of Tortuga, under the charge of my father, then a different person from what he afterwards became. We

"'You treat us with scorn, sir,' said Minna; 'yet yourself should know what a few resolved men may perform'" (p. 249).

were plundered by the Spaniards, and reduced to such extremity of poverty, that my father, in desperation, and in thirst of revenge, took up arms, and having become chief of a little band, who were in the same circumstances, became a buccaneer, as it is called, and cruised against Spain, with various vicissitudes of good and bad fortune, until, while he interfered to check some violence of his companions, he fell by their hands—no uncommon fate among the captains of these rovers. But whence my father came, or what was the place of his birth, I know not, fair Minna, nor have I ever had a curious thought on the subject."

"He was a Briton, at least, your unfortunate father?" said Minna.

"I have no doubt of it," said Cleveland; "his name, which I have rendered too formidable to be openly spoken, is an English one; and his acquaintance with the English language, and even with English literature, together with the pains which he took, in better days, to teach me both, plainly spoke him to be an Englishman. If the rude bearing which I display towards others is not the genuine character of my mind and manners, it is to my father, Minna, that I owe any share of better thoughts and principles which may render me worthy, in some small degree, of your notice and approbation. And yet it sometimes seems to me that I have two different characters; for I cannot bring myself to believe that I, who now walk this lone beach with the lovely Minna Troil, and am permitted to speak to her of the passion which I have cherished, have ever been the daring leader of the bold band whose name was as terrible as a tornado."

"You had not been permitted," said Minna, "to use that bold language towards the daughter of Magnus Troil, had you *not* been the brave and undaunted leader who, with so small means, has made his name so formidable. My heart is like that of a maiden of the ancient days, and is to be won, not by fair words, but by gallant deeds."

"Alas! that heart," said Cleveland; "and what is it that I may do, what is it that man can do, to win in it the interest which I desire?"

"Rejoin your friends, pursue your fortunes, leave the rest to destiny," said Minna. "Should you return, the leader of a gallant fleet, who can tell what may befall?"

"And what shall assure me that, when I return, if return I ever shall, I may not find Minna Troil a bride or a spouse? No, Minna, I will not trust to destiny the only object worth attaining, which my stormy voyage in life has yet offered me."

"Hear me," said Minna. "I will bind myself to you, if you dare accept such an engagement, by the promise of Odin,* the most sacred of our northern rites which are yet practised among us, that I will never favour another until you resign the pretensions which I have given to you. Will that satisfy you? For more I cannot, more I will not give."

"Then with that," said Cleveland, after a moment's pause, "I must

* Note XII. Promise of Odin.

perforce be satisfied; but remember, it is yourself that throw me back upon a mode of life which the laws of Britain denounce as criminal, and which the violent passions of the daring men by whom it is pursued have rendered infamous."

"But I," said Minna, "am superior to such prejudices. In warring with England, I see their laws in no other light than as if you were engaged with an enemy who, in fulness of pride and power, has declared he will give his antagonist no quarter. A brave man will not fight the worse for this; and, for the manners of your comrades, so that they do not infect your own, why should their evil report attach to you?"

Cleveland gazed at her, as she spoke, with a degree of wondering admiration, in which, at the same time, there lurked a smile at her simplicity.

"I could not," he said, "have believed that such high courage could have been found united with such ignorance of the world, as the world is now wielded. For my manners, they who best know me will readily allow, that I have done my best, at the risk of my popularity, and of my life itself, to mitigate the ferocity of my mates; but how can you teach humanity to men burning with vengeance against the world by whom they are proscribed, or teach them temperance and moderation in enjoying the pleasures which chance throws in their way, to vary a life which would be otherwise one constant scene of peril and hardship? But this promise, Minna, this promise, which is all I am to receive in guerdon for my faithful attachment, let me at least lose no time in claiming that."

"It must not be rendered here, but in Kirkwall. We must invoke, to witness the engagement, the Spirit which presides over the ancient Circle of Stennis. But perhaps you fear to name the ancient Father of the Slain too, the Severe, the Terrible?"

Cleveland smiled.

"Do me the justice to think, lovely Minna, that I am little subject to fear real causes of terror; and for those which are visionary I have no sympathy whatever."

"You believe not in them, then?" said Minna, "and are so far better suited to be Brenda's lover than mine."

"I will believe," replied Cleveland, "in whatever you believe. The whole inhabitants of that Valhalla, about which you converse so much with that fiddling, rhyming fool, Claud Halcro—all these shall become living and existing things to my credulity. But, Minna, do not ask me to fear any of them."

"Fear! no, not to *fear* them, surely," replied the maiden; "for, not before Thor or Odin, when they approached in the fulness of their terrors, did the heroes of my dauntless race yield one foot in retreat. Nor do I own them as Deities; a better faith prevents so foul an error. But, in our own conception, they are powerful spirits for good or evil. And

when you boast not to fear them, bethink you that you defy an enemy of a kind you have never yet encountered."

"Not in these northern latitudes," said the lover, with a smile, "where hitherto I have seen but angels; but I have faced, in my time, the demons of the Equinoctial Line, which we rovers suppose to be as powerful and as malignant as those of the North."

"Have you, then, witnessed those wonders that are beyond the visible world?" said Minna, with some degree of awe.

Cleveland composed his countenance, and replied, "A short while before my father's death, I came, though then very young, into the command of a sloop, manned with thirty as desperate fellows as ever handled a musket. We cruised for a long while with bad success, taking nothing but wretched small craft, which were destined to catch turtle, or otherwise loaded with coarse and worthless trumpery. I had much ado to prevent my comrades from avenging upon the crews of those baubling shallops the disappointment which they had occasioned to us. At length we grew desperate, and made a descent on a village, where we were told we should intercept the mules of a certain Spanish governor, laden with treasure. We succeeded in carrying the place; but while I endeavoured to save the inhabitants from the fury of my followers, the muleteers, with their precious cargo, escaped into the neighbouring woods. This filled up the measure of my unpopularity. My people, who had been long discontented, became openly mutinous. I was deposed from my command in solemn council, and condemned, as having too little luck and too much humanity for the profession I had undertaken, to be marooned,* as the phrase goes, on one of those little sandy, bushy islets, which are called, in the West Indies, keys, and which are frequented only by turtle and by sea-fowl. Many of them are supposed to be haunted—some by the demons worshipped by the old inhabitants, some by Caciques and others, whom the Spaniards had put to death by torture, to compel them to discover their hidden treasures, and others by the various spectres in which sailors of all nations have implicit faith.† My place of banishment, called Coffin-key, about two leagues and a half to the south-east of Bermudas, was so infamous as the resort of these supernatural inhabitants, that I believe the wealth of Mexico would not have persuaded the bravest of the scoundrels who put me ashore there to have spent an hour on the islet alone, even in broad daylight; and when they rowed off, they pulled for the sloop like men that dared not cast their eyes behind them. And there they left me, to subsist as I might, on a speck of unproductive sand,

* To *maroon* a seaman, signified to abandon him on a desolate coast or island—a piece of cruelty often practised by pirates and buccaneers.

† An elder brother, now no more, who was educated in the navy, and had been a midshipman in Rodney's squadron in the West Indies, used to astonish the author's boyhood with tales of those haunted islets. On one of them, called, I believe, Coffin-key, the seamen positively refused to pass the night, and came off every evening while they were engaged in completing the watering of the vessel, returning the following sunrise.

surrounded by the boundless Atlantic, and haunted, as they supposed, by malignant demons."

"And what was the consequence?" said Minna eagerly.

"I supported life," said the adventurer, "at the expense of such sea-fowl, aptly called boobies, as were silly enough to let me approach so near as to knock them down with a stick; and by means of turtle-eggs, when these complaisant birds became better acquainted with the mischievous disposition of the human species, and more shy of course of my advances."

"And the demons of whom you spoke?" continued Minna.

"I had my secret apprehensions upon their account," said Cleveland. "In open daylight, or in absolute darkness, I did not greatly apprehend their approach; but in the misty dawn of the morning, or when evening was about to fall, I saw, for the first week of my abode on the key, many a dim and undefined spectre, now resembling a Spaniard with his capa wrapped around him, and his huge sombrero, as large as an umbrella, upon his head, now a Dutch sailor, with his rough cap and trunk-hose, and now an Indian Cacique, with his feathery crown and long lance of cane."

"Did you not approach and address them?" said Minna.

"I always approached them," replied the seaman; "but I grieve to disappoint your expectations, my fair friend,—whenever I drew near them, the phantom changed into a bush, or a piece of drift-wood, or a wreath of mist, or some such cause of deception, until at last I was taught by experience to cheat myself no longer with such visions, and continued a solitary inhabitant of Coffin-key, as little alarmed by visionary terrors as I ever was in the great cabin of a stout vessel, with a score of companions around me."

"You have cheated me into listening to a tale of nothing," said Minna; "but how long did you continue on the island?"

"Four weeks of wretched existence," said Cleveland, "when I was relieved by the crew of a vessel which came thither a-turtling. Yet my miserable seclusion was not entirely useless to me; for on that spot of barren sand I found, or rather forged, the iron mask, which has since been my chief security against treason, or mutiny of my followers. It was there I formed the resolution to seem no softer hearted, nor better instructed, no more humane, and no more scrupulous, than those with whom fortune had leagued me. I thought over my former story, and saw that seeming more brave, skilful, and enterprising than others had gained me command and respect, and that seeming more gently nurtured, and more civilised than they, had made them envy and hate me as a being of another species. I bargained with myself, then, that since I could not lay aside my superiority of intellect and education, I would do my best to disguise, and to sink in the rude seaman, all appearance of better feeling and better accomplishments. I foresaw then what has since happened, that, under the appearance of daring

obduracy, I should acquire such a habitual command over my followers, that I might use it for the insurance of discipline, and for relieving the distresses of the wretches who fell under our power. I saw, in short, that to attain authority I must assume the external semblance, at least, of those over whom it was to be exercised. The tidings of my father's fate, while it excited me to wrath and to revenge, confirmed the resolution I had adopted. He also had fallen a victim to his superiority of mind, morals, and manners, above those whom he commanded. They were wont to call him the gentleman; and, unquestionably, they thought he waited some favourable opportunity to reconcile himself, perhaps at their expense, to those existing forms of society his habits seemed best to suit with, and, even therefore, they murdered him. Nature and justice alike called on me for revenge. I was soon at the head of a new body of the adventurers, who are so numerous in those islands. I sought not after those by whom I had been myself marooned, but after the wretches who had betrayed my father; and on them I took a revenge so severe, that it was of itself sufficient to stamp me with the character of that inexorable ferocity which I was desirous to be thought to possess, and which, perhaps, was gradually creeping on my natural

"So saying, she extricated herself from his grasp" (p. 259).

disposition in actual earnest. My manner, speech, and conduct seemed so totally changed, that those who formerly knew me were disposed to ascribe the alteration to my intercourse with the demons who haunted the sands of Coffin-key; nay, there were some superstitious enough to believe that I had actually formed a league with them."

"I tremble to hear the rest," said Minna; "did you not become the monster of courage and cruelty whose character you assumed?"

"If I have escaped being so it is to you, Minna," replied Cleveland, "that the wonder must be ascribed. It is true, I have always endeavoured to distinguish myself rather by acts of adventurous valour than by schemes of revenge or of plunder, and that at length I could save lives by a rude jest, and sometimes, by the excess of the measures which I myself proposed, could induce those under me to intercede in favour of prisoners; so that the seeming severity of my character has better served the cause of humanity than had I appeared directly devoted to it."

He ceased, and, as Minna replied not a word, both remained silent for a little space, when Cleveland again resumed the discourse,—

"You are silent," he said, "Miss Troil, and I have injured myself in your opinion by the frankness with which I have laid my character before you. I may truly say that my natural disposition has been controlled, but not altered, by the untoward circumstances in which I am placed."

"I am uncertain," said Minna, after a moment's consideration, "whether you had been thus candid, had you not known I should soon see your comrades, and discover, from their conversation and their manners, what you would otherwise gladly have concealed."

"You do me injustice, Minna, cruel injustice. From the instant that you knew me to be a sailor of fortune, an adventurer, a buccaneer, or, if you will have the broad word, a PIRATE, what had you to expect less than what I have told you?"

"You speak too truly," said Minna; "all this I might have anticipated, and I know not how I should have expected it otherwise. But it seemed to me that a war on the cruel and superstitious Spaniards had in it something ennobling—something that refined the fierce employment to which you have just now given its true and dreaded name. I thought that the independent warriors of the Western Ocean, raised up, as it were, to punish the wrongs of so many murdered and plundered tribes, must have had something of gallant elevation, like that of the Sons of the North, whose long galleys avenged on so many coasts the oppressions of degenerate Rome. This I thought, and this I dreamed; I grieve that I am awakened and undeceived. Yet I blame you not for the erring of my own fancy. Farewell; we must now part."

"Say at least," said Cleveland, "that you do not hold me in horror for having told you the truth."

"I must have time for reflection," said Minna, "time to weigh

what you have said, ere I can fully understand my own feelings. Thus much, however, I can say even now, that he who pursues the wicked purpose of plunder, by means of blood and cruelty, and who must veil his remains of natural remorse under an affectation of superior profligacy, is not, and cannot be, the lover whom Minna Troil expected to find in Cleveland; and if she still love him, it must be as a penitent, and not as a hero."

So saying, she extricated herself from his grasp (for he still endeavoured to detain her), making an imperative sign to him to forbear from following her.

"She is gone," said Cleveland, looking after her; "wild and fanciful as she is, I expected not this. She startled not at the name of my perilous course of life, yet seems totally unprepared for the evil which must necessarily attend it; and so all the merit I have gained by my resemblance to a Norse Champion, or King of the Sea, is to be lost at once, because a gang of pirates do not prove to be a choir of saints. I would that Rackam, Hawkins, and the rest had been at the bottom of the Race of Portland—I would the Pentland Frith had swept them to hell rather than to Orkney! I will not, however, quit the chase of this angel for all that these fiends can do. I will—I must to Orkney before the Udaller makes his voyage thither; our meeting might alarm even his blunt understanding, although, thank Heaven, in this wild country men know the nature of our trade only by hearsay, through our honest friends the Dutch, who take care never to speak very ill of those they make money by. Well, if fortune would but stand my friend with this beautiful enthusiast, I would pursue her wheel no farther at sea, but set myself down amongst these rocks, as happy as if they were so many groves of bananas and palmettoes."

With these and such thoughts half rolling in his bosom, half expressed in indistinct hints and mumurs, the pirate Cleveland returned to the mansion of Burgh-Westra.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"There was shaking of hands, and sorrow of heart,
For the hour was approaching when merry folks must part;
So we called for our horses, and ask'd for our way,
While the jolly old landlord said, 'Nothing's to pay.'"

Lilliput, a Poem.

WE do not dwell upon the festivities of the day, which had nothing in them to interest the reader particularly. The table groaned under the usual plenty, which was disposed of by the guests with the usual appetite. The bowl of punch was filled and emptied with the same celerity as usual; the men quaffed, and the women laughed; Claud Halcro rhymed, punned, and praised John Dryden; the Udaller bumpered and sung choruses; and the evening concluded, as usual, in the Rigging-loft, as it was Magnus Troil's pleasure to term the dancing apartment.

It was then and there that Cleveland, approaching Magnus, where he sat betwixt his two daughters, intimated his intention of going to Kirkwall in a small brig, which Bryce Snailsfoot, who had disposed of his goods with unprecedented celerity, had freighted thither, to procure a supply.

Magnus heard the sudden proposal of his guest with surprise, not unmingled with displeasure, and demanded sharply of Cleveland how long it was since he had learned to prefer Bryce Snailsfoot's company to his own? Cleveland answered, with his usual bluntness of manner, that time and tide tarried for no one, and that he had his own particular reasons for making his trip to Kirkwall sooner than the Udaller proposed

to set sail; that he hoped to meet with him and his daughters at the great fair which was now closely approaching, and might perhaps find it possible to return to Zetland along with them.

While he spoke this, Brenda kept her eye as much upon her sister as it was possible to do without exciting general observation. She remarked that Minna's pale cheek became yet paler while Cleveland spoke, and that she seemed, by compressing her lips, and slightly knitting her brows, to be in the act of repressing the efforts of strong interior emotion. But she spoke not; and when Cleveland, having bidden adieu to the Udaller, approached to salute her, as was then the custom, she received his farewell without trusting herself to attempt a reply.

Brenda had her own trial approaching; for Mordaunt Mertoun, once so much loved by her father, was now in the act of making his cold parting from him, without receiving a single look of friendly regard. There was, indeed, sarcasm in the tone with which Magnus wished the youth a good journey, and recommended to him, if he met a bonny lass by the way, not to dream that she was in love, because she chanced to jest with him. Mertoun coloured at what he felt as an insult, though it was but half intelligible to him; but he remembered Brenda, and suppressed every feeling of resentment. He proceeded to take his leave of the sisters. Minna, whose heart was considerably softened towards him, received his farewell with some degree of interest; but Brenda's grief was so visible in the kindness of her manner, and the moisture which gathered in her eye, that it was noticed even by the Udaller, who exclaimed, half angrily, "Why, ay, lass, that may be right enough, for he was an old acquaintance; but mind, I have no will that he remain one!"

Mertoun, who was slowly leaving the apartment, half overheard this disparaging observation, and half turned round to resent it. But his purpose failed him when he saw that Brenda had been obliged to have recourse to her handkerchief to hide her emotion, and the sense that it was excited by his departure obliterated every thought of her father's unkindness. He retired; the other guests followed his example; and many of them, like Cleveland and himself, took their leave overnight, with the intention of commencing their homeward journey on the succeeding morning.

That night, the mutual sorrow of Minna and Brenda, if it could not wholly remove the reserve which had estranged the sisters from each other, at least melted all its frozen and unkindly symptoms. They wept in each other's arms; and though neither spoke, yet each became dearer to the other, because they felt that the grief which called forth these drops had a source common to them both.

It is probable that though Brenda's tears were most abundant, the grief of Minna was most deeply seated; for, long after the younger had sobbed herself asleep, like a child, upon her sister's bosom, Minna lay

awake, watching the dubious twilight, while tear after tear slowly gathered in her eye, and found a current down her cheek as soon as it became too heavy to be supported by her long black silken eyelashes. As she lay, bewildered among the sorrowful thoughts which supplied these tears, she was surprised to distinguish, beneath the window, the sounds of music. At first she supposed it was some freak of Claud Halcro, whose fantastic humour sometimes indulged itself in such serenades. But it was not the *gue* of the old minstrel but the guitar that she heard; an instrument which none in the island knew how to touch except Cleveland, who had learned, in his intercourse with the South-American Spaniards, to play on it with superior execution. Perhaps it was in those climates also that he had learned the song, which, though he now sung it under the window of a maiden of Thule, had certainly never been composed for the native of a climate so northerly and so severe, since it spoke of productions of the earth and skies which are there unknown.

I.

"Love wakes and weeps
While Beauty sleeps:
O for Music's softest numbers,
To prompt a theme
For Beauty's dream,
Soft as the pillow of her slumbers!

II.

"Through groves of palm
Sigh gales of balm,
Fire-flies on the air are wheeling;
While through the gloom
Comes soft perfume,
The distant beds of flowers revealing.

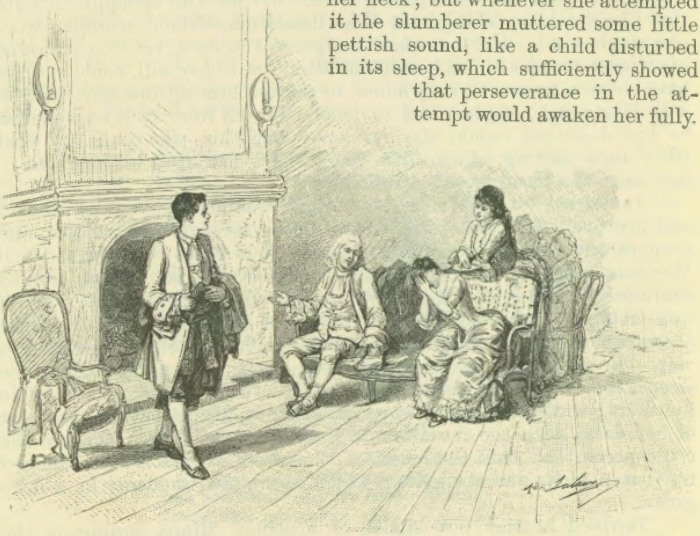
III.

"O wake and live,
No dream can give
A shadow'd bliss the real excelling;
No longer sleep,
From lattice peep,
And list the tale that Love is telling!"

The voice of Cleveland was deep, rich, and manly, and accorded well with the Spanish air, to which the words, probably a translation from the same language, had been adapted. His invocation would not probably have been fruitless could Minna have arisen without awaking her sister. But that was impossible; for Brenda, who, as we have already mentioned, had wept bitterly before she had sunk into repose, now lay with her face on her sister's neck, and one arm stretched around her, in the attitude of a child which has cried itself asleep in the arms of its nurse. It was impossible for Minna to extricate herself from her grasp without awaking her; and she could not, therefore, execute her

hasty purpose of donning her gown and approaching the window to speak with Cleveland, who, she had no doubt, had resorted to this contrivance to procure an interview. The restraint was sufficiently provoking, for it was more than probable that her lover came to take his last farewell; but that Brenda, inimical as she seemed to be of late towards Cleveland, should awake and witness it, was a thought not to be endured.

There was a short pause, in which Minna endeavoured more than once, with as much gentleness as possible, to unclasp Brenda's arm from her neck; but whenever she attempted it the slumberer muttered some little pettish sound, like a child disturbed in its sleep, which sufficiently showed that perseverance in the attempt would awaken her fully.



"Mertoun, who was slowly leaving the apartment, half overheard this disparaging observation" (p. 261).

To her great vexation, therefore, Minna was compelled to remain still and silent; when her lover, as if determined upon gaining her ear by music of another strain, sung the following fragment of a sea-ditty:—

"Farewell! Farewell! the voice you hear,
Has left its last soft tone with you,—
Its next must join the seaward cheer,
And shout among the shouting crew.

"The accents which I scarce could form
Beneath your frown's controlling check,
Must give the word, above the storm,
To cut the mast, and clear the wreck.

"The timid eye I dared not raise,—
The hand that shook when press'd to thine,
Must point the guns upon the chase,—
Must bid the deadly cutlass shine.

"To all I love, or hope, or fear,
Honour, or own, a long adieu!
To all that life has soft and dear,
Farewell! save memory of you!"*

He was again silent; and again she, to whom the serenade was addressed, strove in vain to arise without rousing her sister. It was impossible; and she had nothing before her but the unhappy thought that Cleveland was taking leave in his desolation, without a single glance or a single word. He, too, whose temper was so fiery, yet who subjected his violent mood with such sedulous attention to her will, could she but have stolen a moment to say adieu, to caution him against new quarrels with Mertoun, to implore him to detach himself from such comrades as he had described—could she but have done this, who could say what effect such parting admonitions might have had upon his character—nay, upon the future events of his life?

Tantalised by such thoughts, Minna was about to make another and decisive effort, when she heard voices beneath the window, and thought she could distinguish that they were those of Cleveland and Mertoun, speaking in a sharp tone, which, at the same time, seemed cautiously suppressed, as if the speakers feared being overheard. Alarm now mingled with her former desire to rise from bed, and she accomplished at once the purpose which she had so often attempted in vain. Brenda's arm was unloosed from her sister's neck without the sleeper receiving more alarm than provoked two or three unintelligible murmurs; while, with equal speed and silence, Minna put on some part of her dress, with the intention to steal to the window. But, ere she could accomplish this, the sound of the voices without was exchanged for that of blows and struggling, which terminated suddenly by a deep groan.

Terrified at this last signal of mischief, Minna sprung to the window, and endeavoured to open it, for the persons were so close under the walls of the house that she could not see them, save by putting her head out of the casement. The iron hasp was stiff and rusted, and, as generally happens, the haste with which she laboured to undo it only rendered the task more difficult. When it was accomplished, and Minna had eagerly thrust her body half out at the casement, those who had created the sounds which alarmed her were become invisible, excepting that she saw a shadow cross the moonlight, the substance of which must have been in the act of turning a corner, which concealed it from her sight. The shadow moved slowly, and seemed that of a man who supported another upon his shoulders; an indication which put the

* I cannot suppress the pride of saying that these lines have been beautifully set to original music by Mrs. Arkwright, of Derbyshire.

climax to Minna's agony of mind. The window was not above eight feet from the ground, and she hesitated not to throw herself from it hastily, and to pursue the object which had excited her terror.

But when she came to the corner of the buildings from which the shadow seemed to have been projected, she discovered nothing which could point out the way that the figure had gone; and, after a moment's consideration, became sensible that all attempts at pursuit would be alike wild and fruitless. Besides all the projections and recesses of the many-angled mansion, and its numerous offices, besides the various cellars, storehouses, stables, and so forth, which defied her solitary search, there was a range of low rocks, stretching down to the haven, and which were, in fact, a continuation of the ridge which formed its pier. These rocks had many indentures, hollows, and caverns, into any one of which the figure to which the shadow belonged might have retired with his fatal burden; for fatal, she feared, it was most likely to prove.

A moment's reflection, as we have said, convinced Minna of the folly of further pursuit. Her next thought was to alarm the family; but what tale had she to tell, and of whom was that tale to be told? On the other hand, the wounded man—if indeed he were wounded,—alas, if indeed he were not mortally wounded!—might not be past the reach of assistance; and, with this idea, she was about to raise her voice, when she was interrupted by that of Claud Halcro, who was returning apparently from the haven, and singing, in his manner, a scrap of an old Norse ditty, which might run thus in English:—

"And you shall deal the funeral dole;
Ay, deal it, mother mine,
To weary body, and to heavy soul,
The white bread and the wine.

"And you shall deal my horses of pride;
Ay, deal them, mother mine;
And you shall deal my lands so wide,
And deal my castles nine.

"But deal not vengeance for the deed,
And deal not for the crime;
The body to its place, and the soul to Heaven's grace,
And the rest in God's own time."

The singular adaptation of these rhymes to the situation in which she found herself, seemed to Minna like a warning from Heaven. We are speaking of a land of omens and superstitions, and perhaps will scarce be understood by those whose limited imagination cannot conceive how strongly these operate upon the human mind during a certain progress of society. A line of Virgil, turned up casually, was received in the seventeenth century, and in the court of England,* as an

* The celebrated Sortes Virgilianæ were resorted to by Charles I. and his courtiers as a mode of prying into futurity.

intimation of future events; and no wonder that a maiden of the distant and wild isles of Zetland should have considered as an injunction from Heaven verses which happened to convey a sense analogous to her present situation.

"I will be silent," she muttered, "I will seal my lips—

> 'The body to its place, and the soul to Heaven's grace,
> And the rest in God's own time.'"

"Who speaks there?" said Claud Halcro, in some alarm; for he had not, in his travels in foreign parts, been able by any means to rid himself of his native superstitions. In the condition to which fear and horror had reduced her, Minna was at first unable to reply; and Halcro, fixing his eyes upon the female white figure, which he saw indistinctly (for she stood in the shadow of the house, and the morning was thick and misty), began to conjure her in an ancient rhyme which occurred to him as suited for the occasion, and which had in its gibberish a wild and unearthly sound, which may be lost in the ensuing translation:—

> "Saint Magnus control thee, that martyr of treason;
> Saint Ronan rebuke thee, with rhyme and with reason;
> By the mass of Saint Martin, the might of Saint Mary,
> Be thou gone, or thy weird shall be worse if thou tarry!
> If of good, go hence and hallow thee,
> If of ill, let the earth swallow thee;
> If thou'rt of air, let the grey mist fold thee;
> If of earth, let the swart mine hold thee.
> If a Pixie, seek thy ring,
> If a Nixie, seek thy spring;
> If on middle earth thou'st been
> Slave of sorrow, shame, and sin,
> Hast eat the bread of toil and strife
> And dree'd the lot which men call life,
> Begone to thy stone! for thy coffin is scant of thee,
> The worm, thy playfellow, wails for the want of thee;
> Hence, houseless ghost! let the earth hide thee,
> Till Michael shall blow the blast, see that there thou bide thee!
> Phantom, fly hence! take the cross for a token,
> Hence pass till Hallowmass! my spell is spoken."

"It is I, Halcro," muttered Minna, in a tone so thin and low that it might have passed for the faint reply of the conjured phantom.

"You! you!" said Halcro, his tone of alarm changing to one of extreme surprise; "by this moonlight, which is waning, and so it is! Who could have thought to find you, my most lovely Night, wandering abroad in your own element! But you saw them, I reckon, as well as I? Bold enough in you to follow them, though."

"Saw whom? follow whom?" said Minna, hoping to gain some information on the subject of her fears and anxiety.

"The corpse-lights which danced at the haven," replied Halcro; "they bode no good, I promise you; you wot well what the old rhyme says—

'Where corpse-light
Dances bright,
Be it day or night,
Be it by light or dark,
There shall corpse lie stiff and stark.'

I went half as far as the haven to look after them, but they had vanished. I think I saw a boat put off, however; some one bound for the Haaf, I suppose. I would we had good news of this fishing; there was Norna left us in anger, and then these corpse-lights! Well, God help the while! I am an old man, and can but wish that all were well over. But how now, my pretty Minna? tears in your eyes! And now that I see you in the fair moonlight, barefooted, too, by Saint Magnus! Were there no stockings of Zetland wool soft enough for these pretty feet and ankles, that glance so white in the moonbeam? What, silent! angry, perhaps," he added, in a more serious tone, "at my nonsense? For shame, silly maiden! Remember I am old enough to be your father, and have always loved you as my child."

"I am not angry," said Minna, constraining herself to speak; "but heard you nothing? saw you nothing? They must have passed you."

"They?" said Claud Halcro; "what mean you by they? Is it the corpse-lights? No, they did not pass by me, but I think they have passed by you, and blighted you with their influence, for you are as pale as a spectre. Come, come, Minna," he added, opening a side door of the dwelling, "these moonlight walks are fitter for old poets than for young maidens. And so lightly clad as you are! Maiden, you should take care how you give yourself to the breezes of a Zetland night, for they bring more sleet than odours upon their wings. But, maiden, go in; for, as glorious John says, or as he does not say, for I cannot remember how his verse chimes, but, as I say myself, in a pretty poem, written when my muse was in her teens,—

Menseful maiden ne'er should rise
Till the first beam tinge the skies;
Silk-fringed eyelids still should close
Till the sun has kissed the rose;
Maiden's foot we should not view,
Mark'd with tiny print on dew.
Till the opening flowerets spread
Carpet meet for beauty's tread.

Stay, what comes next? Let me see."

When the spirit of recitation seized on Claud Halcro he forgot time and place, and might have kept his companion in the cold air for half an hour, giving poetical reasons why she ought to have been in bed. But she interrupted him by the question, earnestly pronounced, yet in a voice which was scarcely articulate, holding Halcro, at the same time, with a trembling and convulsive grasp, as if to support herself from falling, "Saw you no one in the boat which put to sea but now?"

"Nonsense," replied Halcro; "how could I see any one, when light and distance only enabled me to know that it was a boat and not a grampus?"

"But there must have been some one in the boat?" repeated Minna, scarce conscious of what she said.

"Certainly," answered the poet; "boats seldom work to windward of their own accord. But come, this is all folly; and so, as the Queen says, in an old play, which was revived for the stage by rare Will D'Avenant, 'To bed—to bed—to bed!'"

They separated, and Minna's limbs conveyed her, with difficulty, through several devious passages, to her own chamber, where she stretched herself cautiously beside her still sleeping sister, with a mind harassed with the most agonising apprehensions. That she had heard Cleveland she was positive; the tenor of the songs left her no doubt on that subject. If not equally certain that she had heard young Mertoun's voice in hot quarrel with her lover, the impression to that effect was strong on her mind. The groan with which the struggle seemed to terminate, the fearful indication from which it seemed that the conqueror had borne off the lifeless body of his victim, all tended to prove that some fatal event had concluded the contest. And which of the unhappy men had fallen? which had met a bloody death? which had achieved a fatal and a bloody victory? These were questions to which the still small voice of interior conviction answered, that her lover Cleveland, from character, temper, and habits, was most likely to have been the survivor of the fray. She received from the reflection an involuntary consolation which she almost detested herself for admitting, when she recollected that it was at once darkened with her lover's guilt, and embittered with the destruction of Brenda's happiness for ever.

"Innocent, unhappy sister!" such were her reflections; "thou that art ten times better than I, because so unpretending, so unassuming in thine excellence! How is it possible that I should cease to feel a pang, which is only transferred from my bosom to thine?"

As these cruel thoughts crossed her mind she could not refrain from straining her sister so close to her bosom, that, after a heavy sigh, Brenda awoke.

"Sister," she said, "is it you? I dreamed I lay on one of those monuments which Claud Halcro described to us, where the effigy of the inhabitant beneath lies carved in stone upon the sepulchre. I dreamed such a marble form lay by my side, and that it suddenly acquired enough of life and animation to fold me to its cold, moist bosom, and it is yours, Minna, that is indeed so chilly. You are ill, my dearest Minna! For God's sake, let me rise and call Euphane Fea. What ails you? Has Norna been here again?"

"Call no one hither," said Minna, detaining her; "nothing ails me for which any one has a remedy, nothing but apprehensions of evil worse than even Norna could prophesy. But God is above all, my dear

Brenda; and let us pray to Him to turn, as He only can, our evil into good."

They did jointly repeat their usual prayer for strength and protection from on high, and again composed themselves to sleep, suffering no word save "God bless you," to pass betwixt them, when their devotions were finished; thus scrupulously dedicating to Heaven their last waking words, if human frailty prevented them from commanding their last waking thoughts. Brenda slept first, and Minna, strongly resisting the dark and evil presentiments which again began to crowd themselves her upon imagination, was at last so fortunate as to slumber also.

The storm which Halcro had expected began about daybreak,—a squall, heavy with wind and rain, such as is often felt, even during the finest part of the season, in these latitudes. At the whistle of the wind, and the clatter of the rain on the shingle-roofing of the fishers' huts, many a poor woman was awakened, and called on her children to hold up their little hands, and join in prayer for the safety of the dear husband and father, who was even then at the mercy of the disturbed elements. Around the house of Burgh-Westra chimneys howled and windows clashed. The props and rafters of the higher parts of the building, most of them formed out of wreck-wood, groaned and quivered, as fearing to be again dispersed by the tempest. But the daughters of Magnus Troil continued to sleep as softly and as sweetly as if the hand of Chantrey had formed them out of statuary marble. The squall had passed away, and the sunbeams, dispersing the clouds which drifted to leeward, shone full through the lattice, when Minna first started from the profound sleep into which fatigue and mental exhaustion had lulled her, and, raising herself on her arm, began to recall events which, after this interval of profound repose, seemed almost to resemble the baseless visions of the night. She almost doubted if what she recalled of horror, previous to her starting from her bed, was not indeed the fiction of a dream, suggested, perhaps, by some external sounds.

"They wept in each other's arms" (p. 261).

"I will see Claud Halcro instantly," she said; "he may know something of these strange noises, as he was stirring at the time."

With that she sprung from bed, but hardly stood upright on the

floor ere her sister exclaimed, "Gracious Heaven! Minna, what ails your foot—your ankle?"

She looked down, and saw with surprise, which amounted to agony, that both her feet, but particularly one of them, was stained with dark crimson, resembling the colour of dried blood.

Without attempting to answer Brenda, she rushed to the window, and cast a desperate look on the grass beneath, for there she knew she must have contracted the fatal stain. But the rain, which had fallen there in treble quantity, as well from the heavens as from the eaves of the house, had washed away that guilty witness, if indeed such had ever existed. All was fresh and fair, and the blades of grass, overcharged and bent with raindrops, glittered like diamonds in the bright morning sun.

While Minna stared upon the spangled verdure, with her full dark eyes fixed and enlarged to circles by the intensity of her terror, Brenda was hanging about her, and with many an eager inquiry pressed to know whether or how she had hurt herself?

"A piece of glass cut through my shoe," said Minna, bethinking herself that some excuse was necessary to her sister; "I scarce felt it at the time."

"And yet see how it has bled," said her sister. "Sweet Minna," she added, approaching her with a wetted towel, "let me wipe the blood off; the hurt may be worse than you think of."

But as she approached, Minna, who saw no other way of preventing discovery that the blood with which she was stained had never flowed in her own veins, harshly and hastily repelled the proffered kindness. Poor Brenda, unconscious of any offence which she had given to her sister, drew back two or three paces on finding her service thus unkindly refused, and stood gazing at Minna with looks in which there was more of surprised and mortified affection than of resentment, but which had yet something also of natural displeasure.

"Sister," said she, "I thought we had agreed but last night that, happen to us what might, we would at least love each other."

"Much may happen betwixt night and morning!" answered Minna, in words rather wrenched from her by her situation than flowing forth the voluntary interpreters of her thoughts.

"Much may indeed have happened in a night so stormy," answered Brenda; "for see where the very wall around Euphane's plant-a-cruive has been blown down; but neither wind nor rain, nor aught else, can cool our affection, Minna."

"But that may chance," replied Minna, "which may convert it into——"

The rest of the sentence she muttered in a tone so indistinct that it could not be apprehended; while, at the same time, she washed the blood-stains from her feet and left ankle. Brenda, who still remained looking on at some distance, endeavoured in vain to assume some tone which might re-establish kindness and confidence betwixt them.

"You were right," she said, "Minna, to suffer no one to help you to dress so simple a scratch; standing where I do it is scarce visible."

"The most cruel wounds," replied Minna, "are those which make no outward show. Are you sure you see it at all?"

"Oh yes!" replied Brenda, framing her answer as she thought would best please her sister; "I see a very slight scratch; nay, now you draw on the stocking I can see nothing."

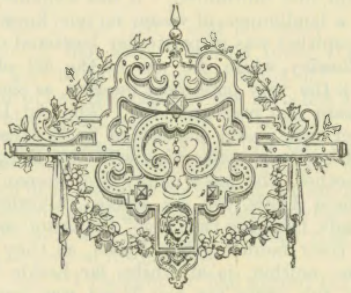
"You do indeed see nothing," answered Minna, somewhat wildly; "but the time will soon come that all—ay, all—will be seen and known."

So saying, she hastily completed her dress, and led the way to breakfast, where she assumed her place amongst the guests; but with a countenance so pale and haggard, and manners and speech so altered and so bewildered, that it excited the attention of the whole company, and the utmost anxiety on the part of her father, Magnus Troil. Many and various were the conjectures of the guests, concerning a distemperature which seemed rather mental than corporeal. Some hinted that the maiden had been struck with an evil eye, and something they muttered about Norna of the Fitful Head; some talked of the departure of Captain Cleveland, and murmured, "it was a shame for a young lady to take on so after a landlouper, of whom no one knew anything;" and this contemptuous epithet was in particular bestowed on the Captain by Mistress Baby Yellowley, while she was in the act of wrapping round her old skinny neck the very handsome owerlay, as she called it, wherewith the said Captain had presented her. The old Lady Glowrowrum had a system of her own, which she hinted to Mistress Yellowley, after thanking God that her own connection with the Burgh-Westra family was by the lass's mother, who was a canny Scotswoman like herself.

"For, as to these Troils, you see, Dame Yellowley, for as high as they hold their heads, they say that ken" (winking sagaciously), "that there is a bee in their bonnet; that Norna, as they call her, for it's not her right name neither, is at whiles far beside her right mind; and they that ken the cause say the Fowd was some gate or other linked in with it, for he will never hear an ill word of her. But I was in Scotland then, or I might have kend the real cause as weel as other folk. At ony rate there is a kind of wildness in the blood. Ye ken very weel daft folk dinna bide to be contradicted; and I'll say that for the Fowd; he likes to be contradicted as ill as ony man in Zetland. But it shall never be said that I said ony ill of the house that I am sae nearly connected wi'. Only ye will mind, dame, it is through the Sinclairs that we are akin, not through the Troils, and the Sinclairs are kend far and wide for a wise generation, dame. But I see there is the stirrup-cup coming round."

"I wonder," said Mistress Baby to her brother, as soon as the Lady Glowrowrum turned from her, "what gars that muckle wife dame, dame, dame that gate at me? She might ken the blude of the Clinkscales is as gude as ony Glowrowrum's amang them."

The guests, meanwhile, were fast taking their departure, scarcely noticed by Magnus, who was so much engrossed with Minna's indisposition that, contrary to his hospitable wont, he suffered them to go away unsaluted. And thus concluded, amidst anxiety and illness, the festival of Saint John, as celebrated on that season at the house of Burgh-Westra; adding another caution to that of the Emperor of Ethiopia,—with how little security man can reckon upon the days which he destines to happiness.



CHAPTER XXIV.

"But this sad evil which doth her infest,
Doth course of natural cause far exceed,
And housed is within her hollow breast,
That either seems some cursed witch's deed,
Or evill spright that in her doth such torment breed."
Fairy Queen, Book III., Canto III.

THE term had now elapsed, by several days, when Mordaunt Mertoun, as he had promised at his departure, should have returned to his father's abode at Jarlshof, but there were no tidings of his arrival. Such delay might, at another time, have excited little curiosity and no anxiety; for old Swertha, who took upon her the office of thinking and conjecturing for the little household, would have concluded that he had remained behind the other guests upon some party of sport or pleasure. But she knew that Mordaunt had not been lately in favour with Magnus Troil; she knew that he proposed his stay at Burgh-Westra should be a short one, upon account of his father's health, to whom, notwithstanding the little encouragement which his filial piety received, he paid uniform attention. Swertha knew all this, and she became anxious. She watched the looks of her master, the elder Mertoun; but, wrapt in dark and stern uniformity of composure, his countenance, like the surface of a midnight lake, enabled no one to penetrate into what was beneath. His studies, his solitary meals, his lonely walks, succeeded each other in unvaried rotation, and seemed undisturbed by the least thought about Mordaunt's absence.

At length such reports reached Swertha's ear, from various quarters, that she became totally unable to conceal her anxiety, and resolved, at the risk of provoking her master into fury, or perhaps that of losing her place in his household, to force upon his notice the doubts which afflicted her own mind. Mordaunt's good-humour and goodly person must indeed have made no small impression on the withered and selfish heart of the poor old woman, to induce her to take a course so desperate, and from which her friend the Ranzelman endeavoured in vain to deter her. Still, however, conscious that a miscarriage in the matter would, like the loss of Trinculo's bottle in the horse-pool, be attended not only with dishonour, but with infinite loss, she determined to proceed on her high emprise with as much caution as was consistent with the attempt.

We have already mentioned that it seemed a part of the very nature of this reserved and unsocial being, at least since his retreat into the utter solitude of Jarlshof, to endure no one to start a subject of conversation, or to put any question to him, that did not arise out of urgent and pressing emergency. Swertha was sensible, therefore, that in order to open the discourse favourably which she proposed to hold with her master, she must contrive that it should originate with himself.

To accomplish this purpose, while busied in preparing the table for Mr. Mertoun's simple and solitary dinner-meal, she formally adorned the table with two covers instead of one, and made all her other preparations as if he was to have a guest or companion at dinner.

The artifice succeeded; for Mertoun, on coming from his study, no sooner saw the table thus arranged, than he asked Swertha—who, waiting the effect of her stratagem as a fisher watches his ground-baits, was fiddling up and down the room—"Whether Mordaunt was returned from Burgh-Westra?"

This question was the cue for Swertha, and she answered in a voice of sorrowful anxiety, half real, half affected, "Na, na! nae sic divot had dunted at their door. It wad be blithe news indeed to ken that young Maister Mordaunt, puir dear bairn, were safe at hame."

"And if he be not at home, why should you lay a cover for him, you doting fool?" replied Mertoun, in a tone well calculated to stop the old woman's proceedings. But she replied, boldly, "that, indeed, somebody should take thought about Maister Mordaunt; a' that she could do was to have seat and plate ready for him when he came. But she thought the dear bairn had been ower lang awa; and, if she maun speak out, she had her ain fears when and whether he might ever come hame."

"*Your* fears!" said Mertoun, his eyes flashing as they usually did when his hour of ungovernable passion approached; "do you speak of your idle fears to me, who know that all of your sex, that is not fickleness, and folly, and self-conceit, and self-will, is a bundle of

idiotical fears, vapours, and tremors? What are your fears to me, you foolish old hag?"

It is an admirable quality in womankind, that, when a breach of the laws of natural affection comes under their observation, the whole sex is in arms. Let a rumour arise in the street of a parent that has misused a child, or a child that has insulted a parent—I say nothing of the case of husband and wife, where the interest may be accounted for in sympathy—and all the women within hearing will take animated and decided part with the sufferer. Swertha, notwithstanding her greed and avarice, had her share of the generous feeling which does so much honour to her sex, and was, on this occasion, so much carried on by its impulse that she confronted her master, and upbraided him with his hard-hearted indifference, with a boldness at which she herself was astonished.

"To be sure it wasna her that suld be fearing for her young maister, Maister Mordaunt, even although he was, as she might weel say, the very sea-calf of her heart; but ony other father, but his honour himsell, wad have had speerings made after the poor lad, and him gane this eight days from Burgh-Westra, and naebody kend when or where he had gane. There wasna a bairn in the howff but was maining for him; for he made all their bits of boats with his knife; there wadna be a dry eye in the parish if aught worse than weal should befall him, na, no ane, unless it might be his honour's ain."

Mertoun had been much struck, and even silenced, by the insolent volubility of his insurgent housekeeper; but, at the last sarcasm, he imposed on her silence in her turn with an audible voice, accompanied with one of the most terrific glances which his dark eye and stern features could express. But Swertha, who, as she afterwards acquainted the Ranzelman, was wonderfully supported during the whole scene, would not be controlled by the loud voice and ferocious look of her master, but proceeded in the same tone as before.

"His honour," she said, "had made an unco wark because a wheen bits of kists and duds, that naebody had use for, had been gathered on the beach by the poor bodies of the township; and here was the bravest lad in the country lost, and cast away, as it were, before his een, and nae ane asking what was come o' him."

"What should come of him but good, you old fool!" answered Mr. Mertoun, "as far, at least, as there can be good in any of the follies he spends his time in?"

This was spoken rather in a scornful than an angry tone, and Swertha, who had got into the spirit of the dialogue, was resolved not to let it drop, now that the fire of her opponent seemed to slacken.

"Oh, ay, to be sure I am an auld fule, but if Maister Mordaunt should have settled down in the Roost, as mair than ae boat had been lost in that wearifu' squall the other morning—by good luck it was short as it was sharp, or naething could have lived in it—or if he were

drowned in a loch coming hame on foot, or if he were killed by miss of footing on a craig,—the haill island kend how venturesome he was, —who," said Swertha, "will be the auld fule then?" And she added a pathetic ejaculation, that "God would protect the poor motherless bairn! for if he had had a mother, there would have been search made after him before now."

This last sarcasm affected Mertoun powerfully. His jaw quivered, his face grew pale, and he muttered to Swertha to go into his study, where she was scarcely ever permitted to enter, and fetch him a bottle which stood there.

"Oh ho!" quoth Swertha to herself, as she hastened on the commission; "my master knows where to find a cup of comfort to qualify his water with upon fitting occasions."

There was indeed a case of such bottles as were usually employed to hold strong waters, but the dust and cobwebs in which they were enveloped showed that they had not been touched for many years. With some difficulty Swertha extracted the cork of one of them, by the help of a fork—for corkscrew was there none at Jarlshof—and having ascertained by smell, and, in case of any mistake, by a moderate mouthful, that it contained wholesome Barbadoes waters, she carried it into the room, where her master still continued to struggle with his faintness. She then began to pour a small quantity into the nearest cup that she could find, wisely judging, that, upon a person so much unaccustomed to the use of spirituous liquors, a little might produce a strong effect. But the patient signed to her impatiently to fill the cup, which might hold more than the third of an English pint measure, up to the very brim, and swallowed it down without hesitation.

"Now the saunts above have a care on us!" said Swertha; "he will be drunk as weel as mad, and wha is to guide him then, I wonder?"

But Mertoun's breath and colour returned, without the slightest symptom of intoxication; on the contrary, Swertha afterwards reported that, "although she had always had a firm opinion in favour of a dram, yet she never saw one work such miracles; he spoke mair like a man of the middle world than she had ever heard him since she had entered his service."

"Swertha," he said, "you are right in this matter, and I was wrong. Go down to the Ranzelman directly, tell him to come and speak with me, without an instant's delay, and bring me special word what boats and people he can command. I will employ them all in the search, and they shall be plentifully rewarded."

Stimulated by the spur which maketh the old woman proverbially to trot, Swertha posted down to the hamlet with all the speed of threescore, rejoicing that her sympathetic feelings were likely to achieve their own reward, having given rise to a quest which promised to be so lucrative, and in the profits whereof she was determined to have her

share, shouting out as she went, and long before she got within hearing, the names of Niel Ronaldson, Sweyn Erickson, and the other friends and confederates who were interested in her mission. To say the truth, notwithstanding that the good dame really felt a deep interest in Mordaunt Mertoun, and was mentally troubled on account of his absence, perhaps few things would have disappointed her more than if he had at this moment started up in her path safe and sound, and rendered unnecessary, by his appearance, the expense and the bustle of searching after him.

Soon did Swertha accomplish her business in the village, and adjust with the senators of the township her own little share of percentage upon the profits likely to accrue on her mission; and speedily did she return to Jarlshof, with Niel Ronaldson by her side, schooling him to the best of her skill in all the peculiarities of her master.

"With some difficulty Swertha extracted the cork of one of them" (p. 276).

"Aboon a' things," she said, "never make him wait for an answer; and speak loud and distinct, as if you were hailing a boat, for he downa bide to say the same thing twice over; and if he asks about distance, ye may make leagues for miles, for he kens naething about the face of the earth that he lives upon; and if he speak of siller, ye may ask dollars for shillings, for he minds them nae mair than sclate-stanes."

Thus tutored, Niel Ronaldson was introduced into the presence of Mertoun, but was utterly confounded to find that he could not act upon the system of deception which had been projected. When he attempted, by some exaggeration of distance and peril, to enhance the hire of the boats and of the men (for the search was to be by sea and land) he found himself at once cut short by Mertoun, who showed not only the most perfect knowledge of the country, but of distances, tides, currents, and all belonging to the navigation of those seas, although these were

topics with which he had hitherto appeared to be totally unacquainted. The Ranzelman, therefore, trembled when they came to speak of the recompense to be afforded for their exertions in the search; for it was not more unlikely that Mertoun should be well informed of what was just and proper upon this head than upon others; and Niel remembered the storm of his fury, when, at an early period after he had settled at Jarlshof, he drove Swertha and Sweyn Erickson from his presence. As, however, he stood hesitating betwixt the opposite fears of asking too much or too little, Mertoun stopped his mouth, and ended his uncertainty, by promising him a recompense beyond what he dared have ventured to ask, with an additional gratuity in case they returned with the pleasing intelligence that his son was safe.

When this great point was settled, Niel Ronaldson, like a man of conscience, began to consider earnestly the various places where search should be made after the young man; and having undertaken faithfully that the inquiry should be prosecuted at all the houses of the gentry, both in this and the neighbouring islands, he added, that, "after all, if his honour would not be angry, there was ane not far off, that, if any body dared speer her a question, and if she liked to answer it, could tell more about Maister Mordaunt than anybody else could. Ye will ken wha I mean, Swertha? Her that was down at the haven this morning." Thus he concluded, addressing himself with a mysterious look to the housekeeper, which she answered with a nod and a wink.

"How mean you?" said Mertoun; "speak out, short and open. Whom do you speak of?"

"It is Norna of the Fitful Head," said Swertha, "that the Ranzelman is thinking about; for she has gone up to Saint Ringan's Kirk this morning on business of her own."

"And what can this person know of my son?" said Mertoun; "she is, I believe, a wandering madwoman, or impostor."

"If she wanders," said Swertha, "it is for nae lack of means at hame, and that is weel known; plenty of a' thing has she of her ain, forby that the Fowd himsell would let her want naething."

"But what is that to my son?" said Mertoun impatiently.

"I dinna ken; she took unco pleasure in Maister Mordaunt from the time she first saw him, and mony a braw thing she gave him at ae time or another, forby the gowd chain that hangs about his bonny craig —folk say it is of fairy gold—I kenna what gold it is, but Bryce Snailsfoot says that the value will mount to a hundred pounds English, and that is nae deaf nuts."

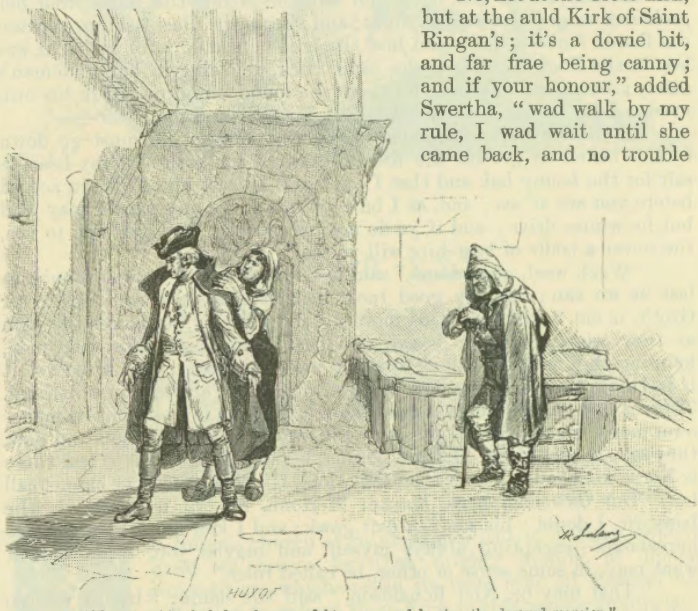
"Go, Ronaldson," said Mertoun, "or else send some one, to seek this woman out, if you think there be a chance of her knowing anything of my son."

"She kens a' things that happens in thae islands," said Niel Ronaldson, "muckle sooner than other folk, and that is Heaven's truth. But as to going to the kirk or the kirkyard to speer after her, there

is not a man in Zetland will do it, for meed or for money; and that's Heaven's truth as weel as the other."

"Cowardly, superstitious fools!" said Mertoun. "But give me my cloak, Swertha. This woman has been at Burgh-Westra; she is related to Troil's family; she may know something of Mordaunt's absence and its cause; I will seek her myself. She is at the Cross-kirk, you say?"

"No, not at the Cross-kirk, but at the auld Kirk of Saint Ringan's; it's a dowie bit, and far frae being canny; and if your honour," added Swertha, "wad walk by my rule, I wad wait until she came back, and no trouble



"Throwing his cloak loosely around him . . . and leaving the decayed mansion."

her when she may be mair busied wi' the dead, for onything that we ken, than she is wi' the living. The like of her carena to have other folk's een on them when they are—gude sain us!—doing their ain particular turns."

Mertoun made no answer, but throwing his cloak loosely around him (for the day was misty, with passing showers), and leaving the decayed mansion of Jarlshof, he walked at a pace much faster than was usual with him, taking the direction of the ruinous church, which stood, as he well knew, within three or four miles of his dwelling.

The Ranzelman and Swertha stood gazing after him in silence, until he was fairly out of ear-shot, when, looking seriously on each

other, and shaking their sagacious heads in the same boding degree of vibration, they uttered their remarks in the same breath.

"Fools are aye fleet and fain," said Swertha.

"Fey folk run fast," added the Ranzelman; "and the thing that we are born to, we cannot win by. I have known them that tried to stop folk that were fey. You have heard of Helen Emberson of Camsey, how she stopped all the boles and windows about the house, that her gudeman might not see daylight, and rise to the Haaf-fishing, because she feared foul weather; and how the boat he should have sailed in was lost in the Roost; and how she came back, rejoicing in her gudeman's safety; but ne'er may care, for there she found him drowned in his own masking-fat, within the wa's of his ain biggin; and moreover——"

But here Swertha reminded the Ranzelman that he must go down to the haven to get off the fishing-boats; "for both that my heart is sair for the bonny lad, and that I am fear'd he cast up of his ain accord before you are at sea; and, as I have often told ye, my master may lead but he winna drive; and if ye do not his bidding, and get out to sea, the never a bodle of boat-hire will ye see."

"Weel, weel, good dame," said the Ranzelman, "we will launch as fast as we can; and, by good luck, neither Clawson's boat, nor Peter Grot's, is out to the Haaf this morning, for a rabbit ran across the path as they were going on board, and they came back like wise men, kenning they wad be called to other wark this day. And a marvel it is to think, Swertha, how few real judicious men are left in this land. There is our great Udaller is weel eneugh when he is fresh, but he makes ower mony voyages in his ship and his yawl to be lang sae; and now, they say, his daughter, Mistress Minna, is sair out of sorts. Then there is Norna kens muckle mair than other folk, but wise woman ye cannot call her. Our tacksman here, Maister Mertoun, his wit is sprung in the bowsprit, I doubt; his son is a daft gowk; and I ken few of consequence hereabouts—excepting always myself, and maybe you, Swertha—but what may, in some sense or other, be called fules."

"That may be, Niel Ronaldson," said the dame; "but if you do not hasten the faster to the shore, you will lose tide; and, as I said to my master some short time syne, wha will be the fule then?"

CHAPTER XXV.

"I do love these ancient ruins;
We never tread upon them but we set
Our foot upon some reverend history;
And, questionless, here, in this open court,
(Which now lies naked to the injuries
Of stormy weather) some men lie interr'd
Loved the Church so well, and gave so largely to it,
They thought it should have canopied their bones
Till doomsday; but all things have their end—
Churches and cities, which have diseases like to men,
Must have like death which we have."

Duchess of Malfy.

THE ruinous church of Saint Ninian had, in its time, enjoyed great celebrity; for that mighty system of Roman superstition, which spread its roots over all Europe, had not failed to extend them even to this remote archipelago, and Zetland had, in the Catholic times, her saints, her shrines, and her relics, which, though little known elsewhere, attracted the homage and commanded the observance of the simple inhabitants of Thule. Their devotion to this church of Saint Ninian, or, as he was provincially termed, Saint Ringan, situated, as the edifice was, close to the sea-beach, and serving, in many points, as a landmark to their boats, was particularly obstinate, and was connected with so much superstitious ceremonial and credulity, that the Reformed clergy thought it best, by an order of the Church Courts, to prohibit all spiritual service within its walls, as tending to foster the rooted faith of the simple and rude people around in saint-worship, and other erroneous doctrines of the Romish Church.

After the church of Saint Ninian had been thus denounced as a seat of idolatry, and desecrated of course, the public worship was transferred to another church; and the roof, with its lead and its rafters, having been stripped from the little rude old Gothic building, it was left in the wilderness to the mercy of the elements. The fury of the uncontrolled winds, which howled along an exposed space, resembling that which we have described at Jarlshof, very soon choked up nave and aisle, and, on the north-west side, which was chiefly exposed to the wind, hid the outside walls more than halfway up with mounds of drifted sand, over which the gable-ends of the building, with the little belfry, which was built above its eastern angle, arose in ragged and shattered nakedness of ruin.

Yet, deserted as it was, the kirk of Saint Ringan still retained some semblance of the ancient homage formerly rendered there. The rude and ignorant fishermen of Dunrossness observed a practice, of which they themselves had well-nigh forgotten the origin, and from which the Protestant clergy in vain endeavoured to deter them. When their boats were in extreme peril it was common amongst them to propose to vow an *awmous*, as they termed it, that is, an alms, to Saint Ringan; and when the danger was over they never failed to absolve themselves of their vow, by coming singly and secretly to the old church, and putting off their shoes and stockings at the entrance of the churchyard, walking thrice around the ruins, observing that they did so in the course of the sun. When the circuit was accomplished for the third time, the votary dropped his offering, usually a small silver coin, through the mullions of a lanceolated window, which opened into a side aisle, and then retired, avoiding carefully to look behind him till he was beyond the precincts which had once been hallowed ground; for it was believed that the skeleton of the saint received the offering in his bony hand, and showed his ghastly death's-head at the window into which it was thrown.

Indeed, the scene was rendered more appalling to weak and ignorant minds, because the same stormy and eddying winds which, on the one side of the church, threatened to bury the ruins with sand, and had, in fact, heaped it up in huge quantities, so as almost to hide the side wall with its buttresses, seemed in other places bent on uncovering the graves of those who had been laid to their long rest on the south-eastern quarter; and, after an unusually hard gale, the coffins, and sometimes the very corpses, of those who had been interred without the usual cerements were discovered, in a ghastly manner, to the eyes of the living.

It was to this desolated place of worship that the elder Mertoun now proceeded, though without any of those religious or superstitious purposes with which the church of Saint Ringan was usually approached. He was totally without the superstitious fears of the country,—nay, from the sequestered and sullen manner in which he lived, withdrawing himself from human society even when assembled for worship, it was the

general opinion that he erred on the more fatal side, and believed rather too little than too much of that which the Church receives and enjoins to Christians.

As he entered the little bay, on the shore, and almost on the beach of which the ruins are situated, he could not help pausing for an instant, and becoming sensible that the scene, as calculated to operate on human feelings, had been selected with much judgment as the site of a religious house. In front lay the sea, into which two headlands, which formed the extremities of the bay, projected their gigantic causeways of dark and sable rocks, on the ledges of which the gulls, scouries, and other sea-fowl appeared like flakes of snow; while, upon the lower ranges of the cliff, stood whole lines of cormorants, drawn up alongside of each other, like soldiers in their battle array, and other living thing was there none to see. The sea, although not in a tempestuous state, was disturbed enough to rush on these capes with a sound like distant thunder, and the billows, which rose in sheets of foam halfway up these sable rocks, formed a contrast of colouring equally striking and awful.

Betwixt the extremities, or capes, of these projecting headlands, there rolled, on the day when Mertoun visited the scene, a deep and dense aggregation of clouds, through which no human eye could penetrate, and which, bounding the vision, and excluding all view of the distant ocean, rendered it no unapt representation of the sea in the "Vision of Mirza," whose extent was concealed by vapours and clouds and storms. The ground rising steeply from the sea-beach, permitting no view into the interior of the country, appeared a scene of irretrievable barrenness, where scrubby and stunted heath, intermixed with the long bent, or coarse grass, which first covers sandy soils, were the only vegetables that could be seen. Upon a natural elevation, which rose above the beach in the very bottom of the bay and receded a little from the sea, so as to be without reach of the waves, arose the half-buried ruin which we have already described, surrounded by a wasted, half-ruinous, and mouldering wall, which, breached in several places, served still to divide the precincts of the cemetery. The mariners who were driven by accident into this solitary bay pretended that the church was occasionally observed to be full of lights, and, from that circumstance, were used to prophesy shipwrecks and deaths by sea.

As Mertoun approached near to the chapel, he adopted, insensibly, and perhaps without much premeditation, measures to avoid being himself seen until he came close under the walls of the burial-ground, which he approached, as it chanced, on that side where the sand was blowing from the graves in the manner we have described.

Here, looking through one of the gaps in the wall which time had made, he beheld the person whom he sought occupied in a manner which assorted well with the ideas popularly entertained of her character, but which was otherwise sufficiently extraordinary.

She was employed beside a rude monument, on one side of which

was represented the rough outline of a cavalier, or knight, on horseback, while, on the other, appeared a shield, with the armorial bearings so defaced as not to be intelligible; which escutcheon was suspended by one angle, contrary to the modern custom, which usually places them straight and upright. At the foot of this pillar was believed to repose, as Mertoun had formerly heard, the bones of Ribolt Troil, one of the remote ancestors of Magnus, and a man renowned for deeds of valorous emprise in the fifteenth century. From the grave of this warrior Norna of the Fitful Head seemed busied in shovelling the sand, an easy task where it was so light and loose; so that it seemed plain that she would shortly complete what the rude winds had begun, and make bare the bones which lay there interred. As she laboured, she muttered her magic song; for without the Runic rhyme no form of northern superstition was ever performed. We have perhaps preserved too many examples of these incantations; but we cannot help attempting to translate that which follows:—

"Champion, famed for warlike toil,
Art thou silent, Ribolt Troil?
Sand, and dust, and pebbly stones,
Are leaving bare thy giant bones.
Who dared touch the wild bear's skin
Ye slumber'd on while life was in?
A woman now, or babe, may come,
And cast the covering from thy tomb.

"Yet be not wrathful, Chief, nor blight
Mine eyes or ears with sound or sight!
I come not, with unhallow'd tread,
To wake the slumbers of the dead,
Or lay thy giant relics bare;
But what I seek thou well canst spare.
Be it to my hand allow'd
To shear a merk's weight from thy shroud;
Yet leave thee sheeted lead enough
To shield thy bones from weather rough.

"See, I draw my magic knife—
Never while thou wert in life
Laid'st thou still for sloth or fear,
When point and edge were glittering near;
See, the cerements now I sever—
Waken now, or sleep for ever!
Thou wilt not wake? the deed is done!
The prize I sought is fairly won.

"Thanks, Ribolt, thanks! for this the sea
Shall smooth its ruffled crest for thee;
And while afar its billows foam,
Subside to peace near Ribolt's tomb.
Thanks, Ribolt, thanks! for this the might
Of wild winds raging at their height,
When to thy place of slumber nigh,
Shall soften to a lullaby.

"She, the dame of doubt and dread,
Norna of the Fitful Head,
Mighty in her own despite,
Miserable in her might;
In despair and frenzy great,
In her greatness desolate;
Wisest, wickedest who lives,
Well can keep the word she gives."

While Norna chanted the first part of this rhyme, she completed the task of laying bare a part of the leaden coffin of the ancient warrior,

"'Yes!' she replied, 'found me you have, and in the place where all men must meet'" (p. 286).

and severed from it, with much caution and apparent awe, a portion of the metal. She then reverentially threw back the sand upon the coffin; and by the time she had finished her song no trace remained that the secrets of the sepulchre had been violated.

Mertoun remained gazing on her from behind the churchyard wall during the whole ceremony, not from any impression of veneration for her or her employment, but because he conceived that to interrupt a madwoman in her act of madness, was not the best way to obtain from her such intelligence as she might have to impart. Meanwhile, he had full time to consider her figure, although her face was obscured by her

dishevelled hair, and by the hood of her dark mantle, which permitted no more to be visible than a Druidess would probably have exhibited at the celebration of her mystical rites. Mertoun had often heard of Norna before; nay, it is most probable that he might have seen her repeatedly, for she had been in the vicinity of Jarlshof more than once since his residence there. But the absurd stories which were in circulation respecting her, prevented his paying any attention to a person whom he regarded as either an impostor or a madwoman, or a compound of both. Yet, now that his attention was, by circumstances, involuntarily fixed upon her person and deportment, he could not help acknowledging to himself that she was either a complete enthusiast, or rehearsed her part so admirably that no Pythoness of ancient times could have excelled her. The dignity and solemnity of her gesture, the sonorous yet impressive tone of voice with which she addressed the departed spirit whose mortal relics she ventured to disturb, were such as failed not to make an impression upon him, careless and indifferent as he generally appeared to all that went on around him. But no sooner was her singular occupation terminated, than, entering the churchyard with some difficulty, by clambering over the disjointed ruins of the wall, he made Norna aware of his presence. Far from starting or expressing the least surprise at his appearance in a place so solitary, she said, in a tone that seemed to intimate that he had been expected, "So,—you have sought me at last?"

"And found you," replied Mertoun, judging he would best introduce the inquiries he had to make by assuming a tone which corresponded to her own.

"Yes!" she replied, "found me you have, and in the place where all men must meet—amid the tabernacles of the dead."

"Here we must, indeed, meet at last," replied Mertoun, glancing his eyes over the desolate scene around, where headstones half covered in sand, and others, from which the same wind had stripped the soil on which they rested, covered with inscriptions, and sculptured with the emblems of mortality, were the most conspicuous objects, "here, as in the house of death, all men must meet at length; and happy those that come soonest to the quiet haven."

"He that dares desire this haven," said Norna, "must have steered a steady course in the voyage of life. *I* dare not hope for such quiet harbour. Darest *thou* expect it? or has the course thou hast kept deserved it?"

"It matters not to my present purpose," replied Mertoun; "I have to ask you what tidings you know of my son, Mordaunt Mertoun?"

"A father," replied the sibyl, "asks of a stranger what tidings she has of his son! How should I know aught of him? The cormorant says not to the mallard, where is my brood?"

"Lay aside this useless affectation of mystery," said Mertoun; "with the vulgar and ignorant it has its effect, but upon me it is

thrown away. The people of Jarlshof have told me that you do know, or may know, something of Mordaunt Mertoun, who has not returned home after the festival of Saint John's, held in the house of your relative, Magnus Troil. Give me such information, if indeed ye have it to give, and it shall be recompensed, if the means of recompense are in my power."

"The wide round of earth," replied Norna, "holds nothing that I would call a recompense for the slightest word that I throw away upon a living ear. But for thy son, if thou wouldst see him in life, repair to the approaching fair of Kirkwall, in Orkney."

"And wherefore thither?" said Mertoun. "I know he had no purpose in that direction."

"We drive on the stream of fate," answered Norna, "without oar or rudder. You had no purpose this morning of visiting the kirk of Saint Ringan, yet you are here; you had no purpose but a minute hence of being at Kirkwall, and yet you will go thither."

"He saw the figure of Norna . . . standing on the very summit of the ruined tower" (p. 288).

"Not unless the cause is more distinctly explained to me. I am no believer, dame, in those who assert your supernatural powers."

"You shall believe in them ere we part," said Norna. "As yet you know but little of me, nor shall you know more. But I know enough of you, and could convince you with one word that I do so."

"Convince me, then," said Mertoun; "for, unless I am so convinced, there is little chance of my following your counsel."

"Mark, then," said Norna, "what I have to say on your son's score, else what I shall say to you on your own will banish every other thought from your memory. You shall go to the approaching fair at Kirkwall; and, on the fifth day of the fair, you shall walk, at the hour of noon, in the outer aisle of the cathedral of Saint Magnus, and there you shall meet a person who will give you tidings of your son."

"You must speak more distinctly, dame," returned Mertoun scornfully, "if you hope that I should follow your counsel. I have been fooled in my time by women, but never so grossly as you seem willing to gull me."

"Hearken, then!" said the old woman. "The word which I speak shall touch the nearest secret of thy life, and thrill thee through nerve and bone."

So saying, she whispered a word into Mertoun's ear, the effect of which seemed almost magical. He remained fixed and motionless with surprise, as, waving her arm slowly aloft, with an air of superiority and triumph, Norna glided from him, turned round a corner of the ruins, and was soon out of sight.

Mertoun offered not to follow or to trace her. "We fly from our fate in vain!" he said, as he began to recover himself; and turning, he left behind him the desolate ruins with their cemetery. As he looked back from the very last point at which the church was visible, he saw the figure of Norna, muffled in her mantle, standing on the very summit of the ruined tower, and stretching out in the sea-breeze something which resembled a white pennon or flag. A feeling of horror, similar to that excited by her last words, again thrilled through his bosom, and he hastened onwards with unwonted speed, until he had left the church of Saint Ninian, with its bay of sand, far behind him.

Upon his arrival at Jarlshof, the alteration in his countenance was so great that Swertha conjectured he was about to fall into one of those fits of deep melancholy which she termed his dark hour.

"And what better could be expected," thought Swertha, "when he must needs go to visit Norna of the Fitful Head, when she was in the haunted kirk of Saint Ringan's?"

But without testifying any other symptoms of an alienated mind than that of deep and sullen dejection, her master acquainted her with his intention to go to the fair of Kirkwall,—a thing so contrary to his usual habits that the housekeeper well-nigh refused to credit her ears. Shortly after, he heard, with apparent indifference, the accounts re-

turned by the different persons who had been sent out in quest of Mordaunt, by sea and land, who all of them returned without any tidings. The equanimity with which Mertoun heard the report of their bad success convinced Swertha still more firmly that, in his interview with Norna, that issue had been predicted to him by the sybil whom he had consulted.

The township were yet more surprised when their tacksman, Mr. Mertoun, as if on some sudden resolution, made preparations to visit Kirkwall during the fair, although he had hitherto avoided sedulously all such places of public resort. Swertha puzzled herself a good deal without being able to penetrate this mystery, and vexed herself still more concerning the fate of her young master. But her concern was much softened by the deposit of a sum of money, seeming, however moderate in itself, a treasure in her eyes, which her master put into her hands, acquainting her at the same time that he had taken his passage for Kirkwall, in a small bark belonging to the proprietor of the island of Mousa.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"Nae langer she wept,—her tears were a' spent,—
Despair it was come, and she thought it content;
She thought it content, but her cheek it grew pale,
And she droop'd, like a lily broke down by the hail."

*Continuation of Auld Robin Grey.**

THE condition of Minna much resembled that of the village heroine in Lady Ann Lindsay's beautiful ballad. Her natural firmness of mind prevented her from sinking under the pressure of the horrible secret which haunted her while awake, and was yet more tormenting during her broken and hurried slumbers. There is no grief so dreadful as that which we dare not communicate, and in which we can neither ask nor desire sympathy; and when to this is added the burden of a guilty mystery to an innocent bosom, there is little wonder that Minna's health should have sunk under the burden.

To the friends around, her habits and manners, nay, her temper, seemed altered to such an extraordinary degree, that it is no wonder that some should have ascribed the change to witchcraft, and some to incipient madness. She became unable to bear the solitude in which she formerly delighted to spend her time; yet when she hurried into society, it was without either joining in, or attending to, what passed.

* It is worth while saying that this motto, and the ascription of the beautiful ballad from which it is taken to the Right Honourable Lady Ann Lindsay, occasioned the ingenious authoress' acknowledgment of the ballad, of which the Editor, by her permission, published a small impression, inscribed to the Bannatyne Club.

Generally she appeared wrapped in sad and even sullen abstraction, until her attention was suddenly roused by some casual mention of the name of Cleveland, or of Mordaunt Mertoun, at which she started, with the horror of one who sees the lighted match applied to a charged mine, and expects to be instantly involved in the effects of the explosion. And when she observed that the discovery was not yet made, it was so far from being a consolation, that she almost wished the worst were known, rather than endure the continued agonies of suspense.

Her conduct towards her sister was so variable, yet uniformly so painful to the kind-hearted Brenda, that it seemed to all around one of the strongest features of her malady. Sometimes Minna was impelled to seek her sister's company, as if by the consciousness that they were common sufferers by a misfortune of which she herself alone could grasp the extent; and then suddenly the feeling of the injury which Brenda had received through the supposed agency of Cleveland made her unable to bear her presence, and still less to endure the consolation which her sister, mistaking the nature of her malady, vainly endeavoured to administer. Frequently, also, did it happen that, while Brenda was imploring her sister to take comfort, she incautiously touched upon some subject which thrilled to the very centre of her soul; so that, unable to conceal her agony, Minna would rush hastily from the apartment. All these different moods, though they too much resembled, to one who knew not their real source, the caprices of unkind estrangement, Brenda endured with such prevailing and unruffled gentleness of disposition, that Minna was frequently moved to shed floods of tears upon her neck; and, perhaps, the moments in which she did so, though embittered by the recollection that her fatal secret concerned the destruction of Brenda's happiness as well as her own, were still, softened as they were by sisterly affection, the most endurable moments of this most miserable period of her life.

The effects of the alternations of moping melancholy, fearful agitation, and bursts of nervous feeling, were soon visible on the poor young woman's face and person. She became pale and emaciated; her eye lost the steady, quiet look of happiness and innocence, and was alternately dim and wild, as she was acted upon by a general feeling of her own distressful condition, or by some quicker and more poignant sense of agony. Her very features seemed to change, and become sharp and eager, and her voice, which, in its ordinary tones, was low and placid, now sometimes sunk in indistinct mutterings, and sometimes was raised beyond the natural key in hasty and abrupt exclamations. When in company with others she was sullenly silent, and, when she ventured into solitude, was observed (for it was now thought very proper to watch her on such occasions) to speak much to herself.

The pharmacy of the islands was in vain resorted to by Minna's anxious father. Sages of both sexes, who knew the virtues of every herb which drinks the dew, and augmented those virtues by words of might,

used while they prepared and applied the medicines, were attended with no benefit; and Magnus, in the utmost anxiety, was at last induced to have recourse to the advice of his kinswoman, Norna of the Fitful Head, although, owing to circumstances noticed in the course of the story, there was at this time some estrangement between them. His first application was in vain. Norna was then at her usual place of residence, upon the sea-coast, near the headland from which she usually took her designation; but, although Eric Scambester himself brought the message, she refused positively to see him, or to return any answer.

Magnus was angry at the slight put upon his messenger and message, but his anxiety on Minna's account, as well as the respect which he had for Norna's real misfortunes and imputed wisdom and power, prevented him from indulging, on the present occasion, his usual irritability of disposition. On the contrary, he determined to make an application to his kinswoman in his own person. He kept his purpose, however, to himself, and only desired his daughters to be in readiness to attend him upon a visit to a relation whom he had not seen for some time, and directed them, at the same time, to carry some provisions along with them, as the journey was distant, and they might perhaps find their friend unprovided.

Unaccustomed to ask explanations of his pleasure, and hoping that exercise and the amusement of such an excursion might be of service to her sister, Brenda, upon whom all household and family charges now devolved, caused the necessary preparations to be made for the expedition; and, on the next morning, they were engaged in tracing the long and tedious course of beach and of moorland, which, only varied by occasional patches of oats and barley, where a little ground had been selected for cultivation, divided Burgh-Westra from the north-western extremity of the Mainland (as the principal island is called) which terminates in the cape called Fitful Head, as the south-western point ends in the cape of Sumburgh.

On they went, through wild and over wold, the Udaller bestriding a strong, square-made, well-barrelled palfrey, of Norwegian breed, somewhat taller, and yet as stout, as the ordinary ponies of the country; while Minna and Brenda, famed, amongst other accomplishments, for their horsemanship, rode two of those hardy animals, which, bred and reared with more pains than is usually bestowed, showed, both by the neatness of their form and their activity, that the race, so much and so carelessly neglected, is capable of being improved into beauty without losing anything of its spirit or vigour. They were attended by two servants on horseback, and two on foot, secure that the last circumstance would be no delay to their journey, because a great part of the way was so rugged or so marshy that the horses could only move at a foot pace; and that, whenever they met with any considerable tract of hard and even ground, they had only to borrow from the nearest herd of ponies the use of a couple for the accommodation of these pedestrians.

The journey was a melancholy one, and little conversation passed, except when the Udaller, pressed by impatience and vexation, urged his pony to a quick pace, and again, recollecting Minna's weak state of health, slackened to a walk, and reiterated inquiries how she felt herself, and whether the fatigue was not too much for her. At noon the party halted, and partook of some refreshment, for which they had made ample provision, beside a pleasant spring, the pureness of whose waters, however, did not suit the Udaller's palate, until qualified by a liberal addition of right Nantz. After he had a second, yea, and a third time,

"When in company with others she was sullenly silent" (p. 291).

filled a large silver travelling-cup, embossed with a German Cupid smoking a pipe, and a German Bacchus emptying his flask down the throat of a bear, he began to become more talkative than vexation had permitted him to be during the early part of their journey, and thus addressed his daughters:—

"Well, children, we are within a league or two of Norna's dwelling, and we shall soon see how the old spell-mutterer will receive us."

Minna interrupted her father with a faint exclamation, while Brenda, surprised to a great degree, exclaimed, "Is it then to Norna that we are to make this visit? Heaven forbid!"

"And wherefore should Heaven forbid?" said the Udaller, knitting his brows; "wherefore, I would gladly know, should Heaven forbid me

to visit my kinswoman, whose skill may be of use to your sister, if any woman in Zetland, or man either, can be of service to her? You are a fool, Brenda! your sister has more sense. Cheer up, Minna! Thou wert ever wont to like her songs and stories, and used to hang about her neck, when little Brenda cried and ran from her like a Spanish merchantman from a Dutch caper." *

"I wish she may not frighten me as much to-day, father," replied Brenda, desirous of indulging Minna in her taciturnity, and at the same time to amuse her father by sustaining the conversation; "I have heard so much of her dwelling, that I am rather alarmed at the thought of going there uninvited."

"Thou art a fool," said Magnus, "to think that a visit from her kinsfolks can ever come amiss to a kind, hearty Hialtland heart like my cousin Norna's. And, now I think on't, I will be sworn that is the reason why she would not receive Eric Scambester! It is many a long day since I have seen her chimney smoke, and I have never carried you thither. She hath indeed some right to call me unkind. But I will tell her the truth; and that is, that though such be the fashion, I do not think it is fair or honest to eat up the substance of lone women-folks, as we do that of our brother Udallers, when we roll about from house to house in the winter season, until we gather like a snowball, and eat up all wherever we come."

"There is no fear of our putting Norna to any distress just now," replied Brenda, "for I have ample provision of everything that we can possibly need—fish, and bacon, and salted mutton, and dried geese; more than we could eat in a week, besides enough of liquor for you, father."

"Right, right, my girl!" said the Udaller; "a well-found ship makes a merry voyage, so we shall only want the kindness of Norna's roof, and a little bedding for you; for, as to myself, my sea-cloak, and honest dry boards of Norway deal, suit me better than your eider-down cushions and mattresses. So that Norna will have the pleasure of seeing us without having a stiver's worth of trouble."

"I wish she may think it a pleasure, sir," replied Brenda.

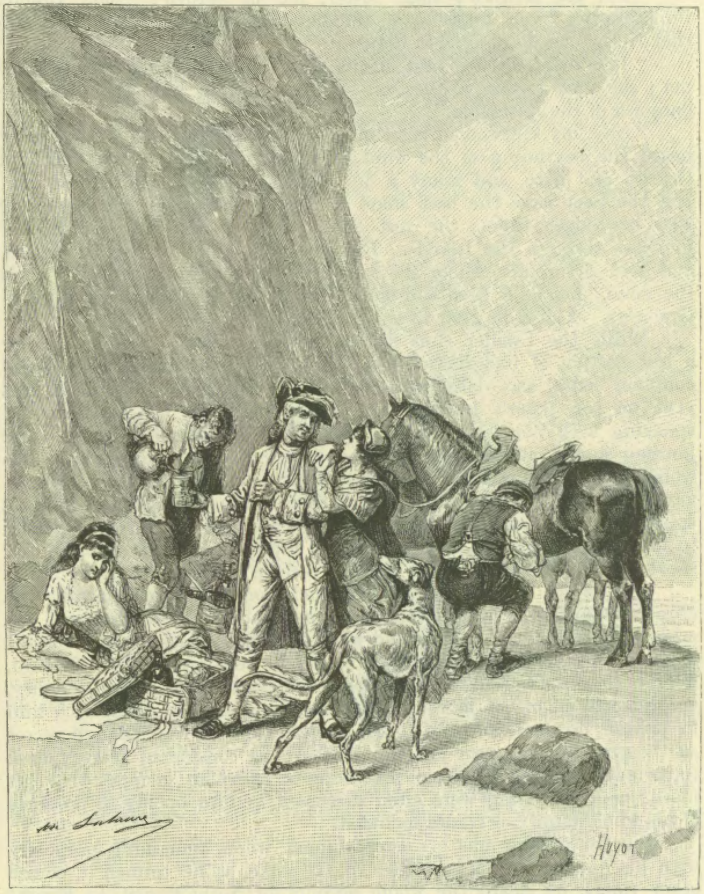
"Why, what does the girl mean, in the name of the Martyr?" replied Magnus Troil. "Dost thou think my kinswoman is a heathen, who will not rejoice to see her own flesh and blood? I would I were as sure of a good year's fishing! No, no! I only fear we may find her from home at present, for she is often a wanderer, and all with thinking over much on what can never be helped."

Minna sighed deeply as her father spoke, and the Udaller went on,—

"Dost thou sigh at that, my girl? Why, 'tis the fault of half the world; let it never be thine own, Minna."

* A light-armed vessel of the seventeenth century, adapted for privateering, and much used by the Dutch.

Another suppressed sigh intimated that the caution came too late.



"Brenda, with some difficulty, contrived to make her father understand she wished to speak with him in private" (p. 296).

"I believe you are afraid of my cousin as well as Brenda is," said the Udaller, gazing on her pale countenance; "if so, speak the word,

and we will return back again as if we had the wind on our quarter, and were running fifteen knots by the line."

"Do, for Heaven's sake, sister, let us return!" said Brenda imploringly; "you know—you remember—you must be well aware that Norna can do nought to help you."

"It is but too true," said Minna, in a subdued voice; "but I know not; she may answer a question—a question that only the miserable dare ask of the miserable."

"Nay, my kinswoman is no miser," answered the Udaller, who only heard the beginning of the word; "a good income she has, both in Orkney and here, and many a fair lispund of butter is paid to her. But the poor have the best share of it, and shame fall the Zetlander who begrudges them; the rest she spends, I wot not how, in her journeys through the islands. But you will laugh to see her house, and Nick Strumpfer, whom she calls Pacolet; many folks think Nick is the devil; but he is flesh and blood, like any of us; his father lived in Græmsay. I shall be glad to see Nick again."

While the Udaller thus ran on, Brenda, who, in recompense for a less portion of imagination than her sister, was gifted with sound common sense, was debating with herself the probable effect of this visit on her sister's health. She came finally to the resolution of speaking with her father aside, upon the first occasion which their journey should afford. To him she determined to communicate the whole particulars of their nocturnal interview with Norna, to which, among other agitating causes, she attributed the depression of Minna's spirits, and then make himself the judge whether he ought to persist in his visit to a person so singular, and expose his daughter to all the shock which her nerves might possibly receive from the interview.

Just as she had arrived at this conclusion, her father, dashing the crumbs from his laced waistcoat with one hand, and receiving with the other a fourth cup of brandy and water, drank devoutly to the success of their voyage, and ordered all to be in readiness to set forward. Whilst they were saddling their ponies, Brenda, with some difficulty, contrived to make her father understand she wished to speak with him in private, no small surprise to the honest Udaller, who, though secret as the grave in the very few things where he considered secrecy as of importance, was so far from practising mystery in general, that his most important affairs were often discussed by him openly in presence of his whole family, servants included.

But far greater was his astonishment when, remaining purposely with his daughter Brenda a little in the wake, as he termed it, of the other riders, he heard the whole account of Norna's visit to Burgh-Westra, and of the communication with which she had then astounded his daughters. For a long time he could utter nothing but interjections, and ended with a thousand curses on his kinswoman's folly in telling his daughters such a history of horror.

"I have often heard," said the Udaller, "that she was quite mad, with all her wisdom, and all her knowledge of the seasons; and, by the bones of my namesake the Martyr, I begin now to believe it most assuredly! I know no more how to steer than if I had lost my compass. Had I known this before we set out, I think I had remained at home; but now that we have come so far, and that Norna expects us——"

"Expects us, father!" said Brenda; "how can that be possible?"

"Why, that I know not, but she that can tell how the wind is to blow can tell which way we are designing to ride. She must not be provoked; perhaps she has done my family this ill for the words I had with her about that lad Mordaunt Mertoun, and if so, she can undo it again; and so she shall, or I will know the cause wherefore. But I will try fair words first."

Finding it thus settled that they were to go forward, Brenda endeavoured next to learn from her father whether Norna's tale was founded in reality. He shook his head, groaned bitterly, and, in a few words, acknowledged that the whole, so far as concerned her intrigue with a stranger, and her father's death, of which she became the accidental and most innocent cause, was a matter of sad and indisputable truth. "For her infant," he said, "he could never, by any means, learn what became of it."

"Her infant!" exclaimed Brenda; "she spoke not a word of her infant!"

"Then I wish my tongue had been blistered," said the Udaller, "when I told you of it! I see that, young and old, a man has no better chance of keeping a secret from you women than an eel to keep himself in his hold when he is sniggled with a loop of horse-hair; sooner or later the fisher teases him out of his hole, when he has once the noose round his neck."

"But the infant, my father," said Brenda, still insisting on the particulars of this extraordinary story, "what became of it?"

"Carried off, I fancy, by the blackguard Vaughan," answered the Udaller with a gruff accent, which plainly betokened how weary he was of the subject.

"By Vaughan?" said Brenda, "the lover of poor Norna, doubtless! What sort of a man was he, father?"

"Why, much like other men, I fancy," answered the Udaller; "I never saw him in my life. He kept company with the Scottish families at Kirkwall, and I with the good old Norse folk. Ah! if Norna had dwelt always amongst her own kin, and not kept company with her Scottish acquaintance, she would have known nothing of Vaughan, and things might have been otherwise. But then I should have known nothing of your blessed mother, Brenda, and that," he said, his large blue eyes shining with a tear, "would have saved me a short joy and a long sorrow."

"Norna could but ill have supplied my mother's place to you,

father, as a companion and a friend; that is, judging from all I have heard," said Brenda, with some hesitation. But Magnus, softened by recollections of his beloved wife, answered her with more indulgence than she expected.

"I would have been content," he said, "to have wedded Norna at that time. It would have been the soldering of an old quarrel—the healing of an old sore. All our blood relations wished it, and, situated as I was, especially not having seen your blessed mother, I had little will to oppose their counsels. You must not judge of Norna or of me by such an appearance as we now present to you. She was young and beautiful, and I gamesome as a Highland buck, and little caring what haven I made for, having, as I thought, more than one under my lee. But Norna preferred this man Vaughan, and, as I told you before, it was, perhaps, the best kindness she could have done to me."

"Ah, poor kinswoman!" said Brenda. "But believe you, father, in the high powers which she claims—in the mysterious vision of the dwarf, in the——"

She was interrupted in these questions by Magnus, to whom they were obviously displeasing.

"I believe, Brenda," he said, "according to the belief of my forefathers; I pretend not to be a wiser man than they were in their time; and they all believed that, in cases of great worldly distress, Providence opened the eyes of the mind, and afforded the sufferers a vision of futurity. It was but a trimming of the boat, with reverence," here he touched his hat reverentially; "and, after all the shifting of ballast, poor Norna is as heavily loaded in the bows as ever was an Orkneyman's yawl at the dog-fishing; she has more than affliction enough on board to balance whatever gifts she may have had in the midst of her calamity. They are as painful to her, poor soul, as a crown of thorns would be to her brows, though it were the badge of the empire of Denmark. And do not you, Brenda, seek to be wiser than your fathers. Your sister Minna, before she was so ill, had as much reverence for whatever was produced in Norse as if it had been in the Pope's bull, which is all written in pure Latin."

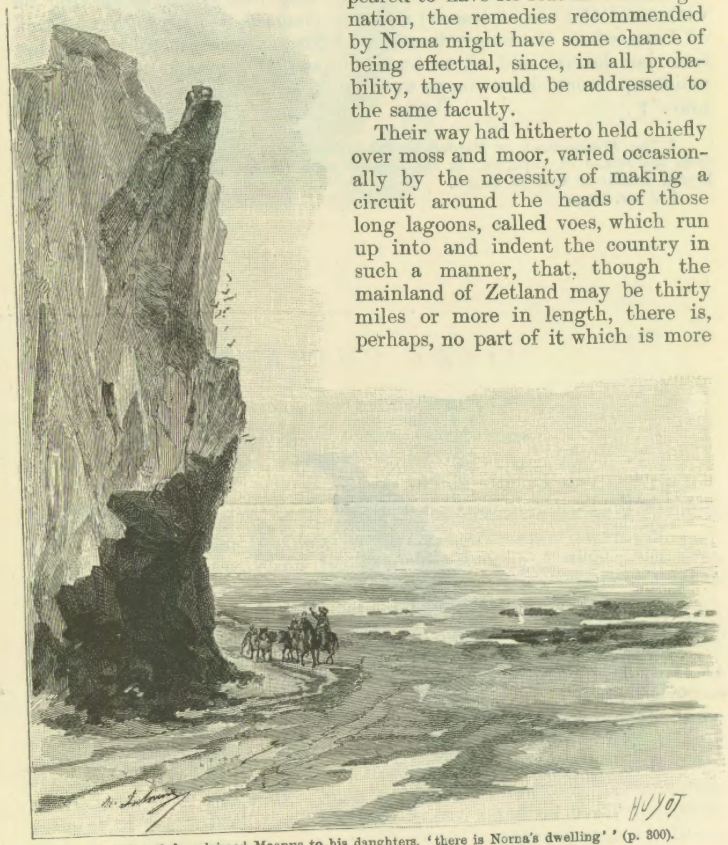
"Poor Norna!" repeated Brenda, "and her child—was it never recovered?"

"What do I know of her child," said the Udaller, more gruffly than before, "except that she was very ill, both before and after the birth, though we kept her as merry as we could with pipe and harp, and so forth. The child had come before its time into this bustling world, so it is likely it has been long dead. But you know nothing of all these matters, Brenda, so get along for a foolish girl, and ask no more questions about what it does not become you to inquire into."

So saying, the Udaller gave his sturdy little palfrey the spur, and cantering forward over rough and smooth, while the pony's accuracy and firmness of step put all difficulties of the path at secure defiance,

he placed himself soon by the side of the melancholy Minna, and permitted her sister to have no farther share in his conversation than as it was addressed to them jointly. She could but comfort herself with hope that, as Minna's disease appeared to have its seat in the imagination, the remedies recommended by Norna might have some chance of being effectual, since, in all probability, they would be addressed to the same faculty.

Their way had hitherto held chiefly over moss and moor, varied occasionally by the necessity of making a circuit around the heads of those long lagoons, called voes, which run up into and indent the country in such a manner, that, though the mainland of Zetland may be thirty miles or more in length, there is, perhaps, no part of it which is more



"'At length,' exclaimed Magnus to his daughters, 'there is Norna's dwelling' " (p. 300).

than three miles distant from the salt water. But they had now approached the north-western extremity of the isle, and travelled along the top of an immense ridge of rocks, which had for ages withstood the rage of the Northern Ocean, and of all the winds by which it is buffeted.

"At length," exclaimed Magnus to his daughters, "there is Norna's dwelling! Look up, Minna, my love, for if this does not make you laugh, nothing will. Saw you ever anything but an osprey that would have made such a nest for herself as that is? By my namesake's bones, there is not the like of it that living thing ever dwelt in (having no wings and the use of reason) unless it chanced to be the Frawa-Stack off Papa, where the king's daughter of Norway was shut up to keep her from her lovers; and all to little purpose, if the tale be true;* for, maidens, I would have you to wot that it is hard to keep flax from the lowe."†

* The *Frawa-Stack*, or Maiden-Rock, an inaccessible cliff, divided by a narrow gulf from the Island of Papa, has on the summit some ruins, concerning which there is a legend similar to that of Danaë.

† *Lowe*, flame.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Thrice from the cavern's darksome womb
Her groaning voice arose;
And come, my daughter, fearless come,
And fearless tell thy woes!"

MEIKLE.

THE dwelling of Norna, though none but a native of Zetland, familiar, during his whole life, with every variety of rock-scenery, could have seen anything ludicrous in this situation, was not unaptly compared by Magnus Troil to the eyry of the osprey, or sea-eagle. It was very small, and had been fabricated out of one of those dens which are called Burghs and Picts-houses in Zetland, and Duns on the mainland of Scotland and the Hebrides, and which seem to be the first effort at architecture, the connecting link betwixt a fox's hole in a cairn of loose stones, and an attempt to construct a human habitation out of the same materials, without the use of lime or cement of any kind, without any timber, so far as can be seen from their remains, without any knowledge of the arch or of the stair. Such as they are, however, the numerous remains of these dwellings—for there is one found on every headland, islet, or point of vantage which could afford the inhabitants additional means of defence—tend to prove that the remote people by whom these Burghs were constructed were a numerous race, and that the islands had then a much greater population than, from other circumstances, we might have been led to anticipate.

The Burgh, of which we at present speak, had been altered and repaired at a later period, probably by some petty despot, or sea-rover, who, tempted by the security of the situation, which occupied the whole of a projecting point of rock, and was divided from the mainland by a rent or chasm of some depth, had built some additions to it in the rudest style of Gothic defensive architecture; had plastered the inside with lime and clay, and broken out windows for the admission of light and air; and, finally, by roofing it over, and dividing it into stories, by means of beams of wreck-wood, had converted the whole into a tower, resembling a pyramidical dovecot, formed by a double wall, still containing within its thickness that set of circular galleries, or concentric rings, which is proper to all the forts of this primitive construction, and which seem to have constituted the only shelter which they were originally qualified to afford to their shivering inhabitants.*

This singular habitation, built out of the loose stones which lay scattered around, and exposed for ages to the vicissitudes of the elements, was as grey, weatherbeaten, and wasted as the rock on which it was founded, and from which it could not easily be distinguished, so completely did it resemble in colour, and so little did it differ in regularity of shape, from a pinnacle or fragment of the cliff.

Minna's habitual indifference to all that of late had passed around her was for a moment suspended by the sight of an abode which, at another and happier period of her life, would have attracted at once her curiosity and her wonder. Even now she seemed to feel interest as she gazed upon this singular retreat, and recollected it was that of certain misery and probable insanity, connected, as its inhabitant asserted, and Minna's faith admitted, with power over the elements, and the capacity of intercourse with the invisible world.

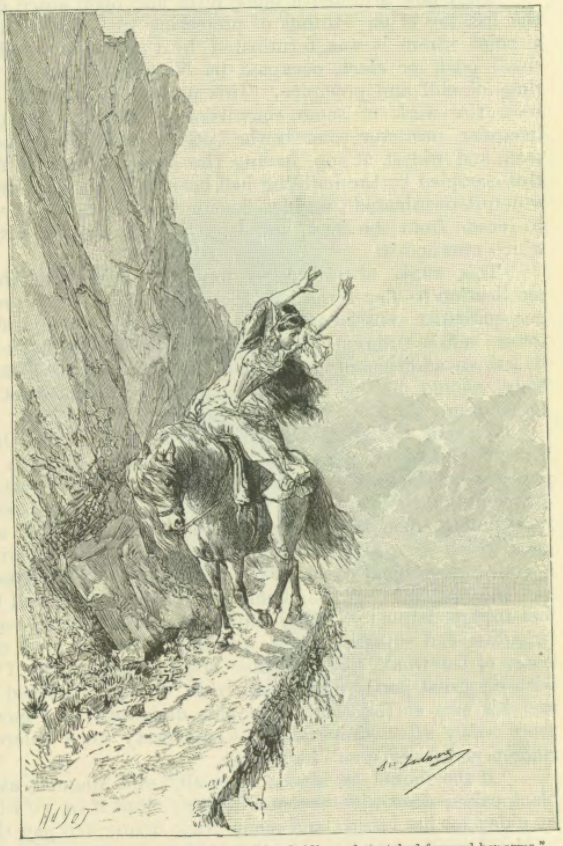
"Our kinswoman," she muttered, "has chosen her dwelling well; with no more of earth than a sea-fowl might rest upon, and all around sightless tempests and raging waves. Despair and magical power could not have a fitter residence."

Brenda, on the other hand, shuddered when she looked on the dwelling to which they were advancing by a difficult, dangerous, and precarious path, which sometimes, to her great terror, approached to the verge of the precipice; so that, Zetlander as she was, and confident, as she had reason to be, in the steadiness and sagacity of the sure-footed pony, she could scarce suppress an inclination to giddiness, especially at one point, when, being foremost of the party, and turning a sharp angle of the rock, her feet, as they projected from the side of the pony, hung for an instant sheer over the ledge of the precipice, so that there was nothing save empty space betwixt the sole of her shoe and the white foam of the vexed ocean, which dashed, howled, and foamed five hundred feet below. What would have driven a maiden of another country into delirium gave her but a momentary uneasiness, which was

* Note XIII. The Pictish Burgh.

instantly lost in the hope that the impression which the scene appeared to make on her sister's imagination might be favourable to her cure.

She could not help looking back to see how Minna should pass the point of peril which she herself had just rounded; and could hear the strong voice of the Udaller, though to him such rough paths were familiar as the smooth sea-beach, call, in a tone of some anxiety, "Take heed, jarto," * as Minna, with an eager look, dropped her bridle, and stretched forward her arms, and even her body, over the precipice, in the attitude of the wild swan, when balancing itself, and spreading its broad pinions, it prepares to launch from the cliff upon the bosom of the winds. Brenda felt, at that instant, a pang of unutterable terror, which left a strong impression on her nerves, even when relieved, as it instantly was, by her sister recovering herself and sitting upright on her saddle, the opportunity



"Minna, with an eager look, dropped her bridle, and stretched forward her arms."

* *Jarto*, my dear.

and temptation (if she felt it) passing away, as the quiet, steady animal which supported her rounded the projecting angle, and turned its patient and firm step from the verge of the precipice.

They now attained a more level and open space of ground, being the flat top of an isthmus of projecting rock, narrowing again towards a point where it was terminated by the chasm which separated the small peak or *stack*, occupied by Norna's habitation, from the main ridge of cliff and precipice. This natural fosse, which seemed to have been the work of some convulsion of nature, was deep, dark, and irregular, narrower towards the bottom, which could not be distinctly seen, and widest at top, having the appearance as if that part of the cliff occupied by the building had been half rent away from the isthmus which it terminated; an idea favoured by the angle at which it seemed to recede from the land, and lean towards the sea, with the building which crowned it.

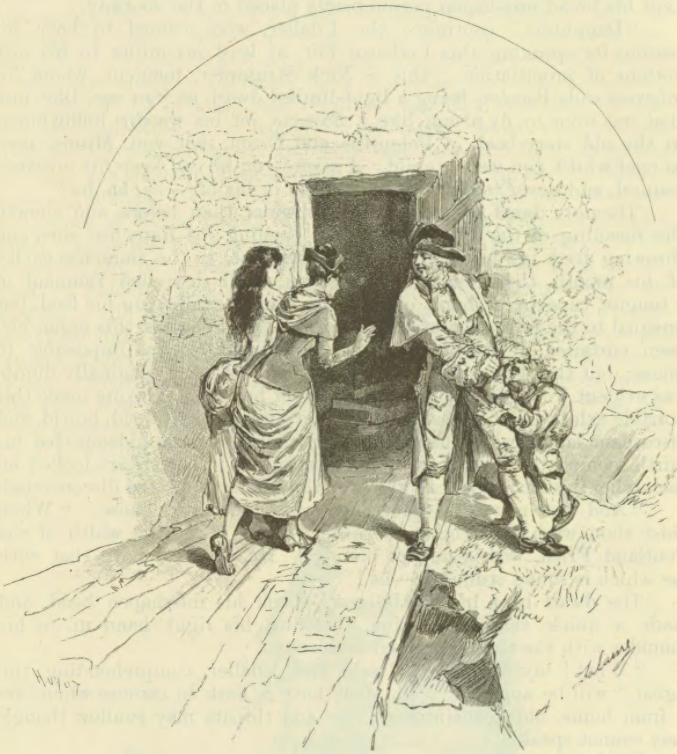
This angle of projection was so considerable that it required recollection to dispel the idea that the rock, so much removed from the perpendicular, was about to precipitate itself seaward, with its old tower; and a timorous person would have been afraid to put foot upon it, lest an addition of weight, so inconsiderable as that of the human body, should hasten a catastrophe which seemed at every instant impending.

Without troubling himself about such fantasies, the Udaller rode towards the tower, and there, dismounting along with his daughters, gave the ponies in charge to one of their domestics, with directions to disencumber them of their burdens, and turn them out for rest and refreshment upon the nearest heath. This done, they approached the gate, which seemed formerly to have been connected with the land by a rude drawbridge, some of the apparatus of which was still visible. But the rest had been long demolished, and was replaced by a stationary foot-bridge, formed of barrel-staves covered with turf, very narrow and ledgeless, and supported by a sort of arch, constructed out of the jaw-bones of the whale. Along this "brigg of dread" the Udaller stepped with his usual portly majesty of stride, which threatened its demolition and his own at the same time; his daughters trod more lightly and more safely after him, and the whole party stood before the low and rugged portal of Norna's habitation.

"If she should be abroad after all," said Magnus, as he plied the black oaken door with repeated blows; "but if so, we will at least lie by a day for her return, and make Nick Strumpfer pay the demurrage in bland and brandy."

As he spoke the door opened, and displayed, to the alarm of Brenda, and the surprise of Minna herself, a square-made dwarf, about four feet five inches high, with a head of most portentous size, and features correspondent—namely, a huge mouth, a tremendous nose, with large black nostrils, which seemed to have been slit upwards, blubber

lips of an unconscionable size, and huge wall-eyes, with which he leered, sneered, grinned, and goggled on the Udaller as an old acquaintance, without uttering a single word. The young women could hardly persuade themselves that they did not see before their eyes the very demon Trolld who made such a distinguished figure in Norna's legend. Their



"Magnus Troil laid his sturdy hand upon the collar of the recusant dwarf's jacket" (p. 307).

father went on addressing this uncouth apparition in terms of such condescending friendship as the better sort apply to their inferiors when they wish, for any immediate purpose, to conciliate or coax them,—a tone, by-the-bye, which generally contains, in its very familiarity, as much offence as the more direct assumption of distance and superiority.

"Ha, Nick! honest Nick!" said the Udaller, "here you are, lively

and lovely as Saint Nicholas your namesake, when he is carved with an axe for the headpiece of a Dutch dogger. How dost thou do, Nick, or Pacolet, if you like that better? Nicholas, here are my two daughters, nearly as handsome as thyself, thou seest."

Nick grinned, and did a clumsy obeisance by way of courtesy, but kept his broad misshapen person firmly placed in the doorway.

"Daughters," continued the Udaller, who seemed to have his reasons for speaking this Cerberus fair, at least according to his own notions of propitiation, "this is Nick Strumpfer, maidens, whom his mistress calls Pacolet, being a light-limbed dwarf, as you see, like him that was wont to fly about, like a *Scourie*, on his wooden hobbyhorse, in the old story-book of Valentine and Orson, that you, Minna, used to read whilst you were a child. I assure you he can keep his mistress' counsel, and never told one of her secrets in his life—ha, ha, ha!"

The ugly dwarf grinned ten times wider than before, and showed the meaning of the Udaller's jest by opening his immense jaws, and throwing back his head, so as to discover that, in the immense cavity of his mouth, there only remained the small shrivelled remnant of a tongue, capable, perhaps, of assisting him in swallowing his food, but unequal to the formation of articulate sounds. Whether this organ had been curtailed by cruelty or injured by disease it was impossible to guess; but that the unfortunate being had not been originally dumb, was evident from his retaining the sense of hearing. Having made this horrible exhibition, he repaid the Udaller's mirth with a loud, horrid, and discordant laugh, which had something in it the more hideous that his mirth seemed to be excited by his own misery. The sisters looked on each other in silence and fear, and even the Udaller appeared disconcerted.

"And how now?" he proceeded, after a minute's pause. "When didst thou wash that throat of thine, that is about the width of the Pentland Frith, with a cup of brandy? Ha, Nick! I have that with me which is sound stuff, boy—ha!"

The dwarf bent his beetle-brows, shook his misshapen head, and made a quick, sharp indication, throwing his right hand up to his shoulder with the thumb pointed backwards.

"What! my kinswoman," said the Udaller, comprehending the signal, "will be angry? Well, shalt have a flask to carouse when she is from home, old acquaintance; lips and throats may swallow though they cannot speak."

Pacolet grinned a grim assent.

"And now," said the Udaller, "stand out of the way, Pacolet, and let me carry my daughters to see their kinswoman. By the bones of Saint Magnus, it shall be a good turn in thy way! Nay, never shake thy head, man; for if thy mistress be at home see her we will."

The dwarf again intimated the impossibility of their being admitted, partly by signs, partly by mumbling some uncouth and most disagreeable sounds, and the Udaller's mood began to arise.

"Tittle tattle, man!" said he; "trouble not me with thy gibberish, but stand out of the way, and the blame, if there be any, shall rest with me." So saying, Magnus Troil laid his sturdy hand upon the collar of the recusant dwarf's jacket of blue wadmaal, and, with a strong, but not a violent grasp, removed him from the doorway, pushed him gently aside, and entered, followed by his two daughters, whom a sense of apprehension, arising out of all which they saw and heard, kept very close to him. A crooked and dusky passage, through which Magnus led the way, was dimly enlightened by a shot-hole, communicating with the interior of the building, and originally intended, doubtless, to command the entrance by a hagbut or culverin. As they approached nearer, for they walked slowly and with hesitation, the light, imperfect as it was, was suddenly obscured; and, on looking upward to discern the cause, Brenda was startled to observe the pale and obscurely seen countenance of Norna gazing downward upon them, without speaking a word. There was nothing extraordinary in this, as the mistress of the mansion might be naturally enough looking out to see what guests were thus suddenly and unceremoniously intruding themselves on her presence. Still, however, the natural paleness of her features, exaggerated by the light in which they were at present exhibited, the immovable sternness of her look, which showed neither kindness nor courtesy of civil reception, her dead silence, and the singular appearance of everything about her dwelling, augmented the dismay which Brenda had already conceived. Magnus Troil and Minna had walked slowly forward, without observing the apparition of their singular hostess.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"The witch then raised her wither'd arm,
And waved her wand on high,
And, while she spoke the mutter'd charm,
Dark lightning fill'd her eye."

MEIKLE.

"THIS should be the stair," said the Udaller, blundering in the dark against some steps of irregular ascent. "This should be the stair, unless my memory greatly fail me; ay, and there she sits," he added, pausing at the half-open door, "with all her tackle about her as usual, and as busy, doubtless, as the devil in a gale of wind."

As he made this irreverent comparison, he entered, followed by his daughters, the darkened apartment in which Norna was seated, amidst a confused collection of books of various languages, parchment scrolls, tablets and stones inscribed with the straight and angular characters of the Runic alphabet, and similar articles, which the vulgar might have connected with the exercise of the forbidden arts. There were also lying in the chamber, or hung over the rude and ill-contrived chimney, an old shirt of mail, with the headpiece, battle-axe, and lance which had once belonged to it; and on a shelf were disposed, in great order, several of those curious stone axes, formed of green granite, which are often found in those islands, where they are called thunderbolts by the common people, who usually preserve them as a charm of security against the effects of lightning. There was, moreover, to be seen, amid the strange collection, a stone sacrificial knife, used perhaps for immolating human victims, and one or two of the brazen implements

called Celts, the purpose of which has troubled the repose of so many antiquaries. A variety of other articles, some of which had neither name nor were capable of description, lay in confusion about the apartment; and in one corner, on a quantity of withered seaweed, reposed what seemed, at first view, to be a large unshapely dog, but, when seen more closely, proved to be a tame seal, which it had been Norna's amusement to domesticate.

This uncouth favourite bristled up in its corner, upon the arrival of so many strangers, with an alertness similar to that which a terrestrial dog would have displayed on a similar occasion; but Norna remained motionless, seated behind a table of rough granite, propped up by misshapen feet of the same material, which, besides the old book with which she seemed to be busied, sustained a cake of the coarse unleavened bread, three parts oatmeal, and one the sawdust of fir, which is used by the poor peasants of Norway, beside which stood a jar of water.

Magnus Troil remained a minute in silence gazing upon his kinswoman, while the singularity of her mansion inspired Brenda with much fear, and changed, though but for a moment, the melancholy and abstracted mood of Minna into a feeling of interest not unmixed with awe. The silence was interrupted by the Udaller, who, unwilling on the one hand to give his kinswoman offence, and desirous on the other to show that he was not daunted by a reception so singular, opened the conversation thus;—

"I give you good e'en, cousin Norna; my daughters and I have come far to see you."

Norna raised her eyes from her volume, looked full at her visitors, then let them quietly sit down on the leaf with which she seemed to be engaged.

"Nay, cousin," said Magnus, "take your own time; our business with you can wait your leisure. See here, Minna, what a fair prospect here is of the cape, scarce a quarter of a mile off! you may see the billows breaking on it topmast high. Our kinswoman has got a pretty seal, too. Here, sealchie, my man, whew, whew!"

The seal took no further notice of the Udaller's advances to acquaintance than by uttering a low growl.

"He is not so well trained," continued the Udaller, affecting an air of ease and unconcern, "as Peter MacRaw's, the old piper of Stornoway, who had a seal that flapped its tail to the tune of *Caberfae*, and acknowledged no other whatever.* Well, cousin," he concluded, observing that Norna closed her book, "are you going to give us a welcome at last, or must we go farther than our blood-relation's house to seek one, and that when the evening is wearing late apace?"

* The MacRaws were followers of the MacKenzies, whose chief has the name of Caberfae, or Buckshead, from the cognisance borne on his standards. Unquestionably the worthy piper trained the seal on the same principle of respect to the clan-term which I have heard has been taught to dogs, who, unused to any other air, dance after their fashion to the tune of Caberfae.

"Ye dull and hard-hearted generation, as deaf as the adder to the voice of the charmer," answered Norna, addressing them, "why come ye to me? You have slighted every warning I could give of the coming harm, and now that it hath come upon you, ye seek my counsel when it can avail you nothing."

"Look you, kinswoman," said the Udaller, with his usual frankness and boldness of manner and accent, "I must needs tell you that your courtesy is something of the coarsest and the coldest. I cannot say that I ever saw an adder, in regard there are none in these parts; but touching my own thoughts of what such a thing may be, it cannot be termed a suitable comparison to me or to my daughters, and that I would have you to know. For old acquaintance, and certain other reasons, I do not leave your house upon the instant; but as I came hither in all kindness and civility, so I pray you to receive me with the like, otherwise we will depart, and leave shame on your inhospitable threshold."

"How," said Norna, "dare you use such bold language in the house of one from whom all men, from whom you yourself, come to solicit counsel and aid? They who speak to the Reimkennar must lower their voice to her before whom winds and waves hush both blast and billow."

"Blast and billow may hush themselves if they will," replied the peremptory Udaller, "but that will not I. I speak in the house of my friend as in my own, and strike sail to none."

"And hope ye," said Norna, "by this rudeness to compel me to answer to your interrogatories?"

"Kinswoman," replied Magnus Troil, "I know not so much as you of the old Norse sagas; but this I know, that when kempies were wont, long since, to seek the habitations of the gall-dragons and spae-women, they came with their axes on their shoulders, and their good swords drawn in their hands, and compelled the power whom they invoked to listen to and to answer them, ay, were it Odin himself."

"Kinsman," said Norna, arising from her seat, and coming forward, "thou hast spoken well, and in good time for thyself and thy daughters; for hadst thou turned from my threshold without extorting an answer, morning's sun had never again shone upon you. The spirits who serve me are jealous, and will not be employed in aught that may benefit humanity unless their service is commanded by the undaunted importunity of the brave and the free. And now speak, what wouldst thou have of me?"

"My daughter's health," replied Magnus, "which no remedies have been able to restore."

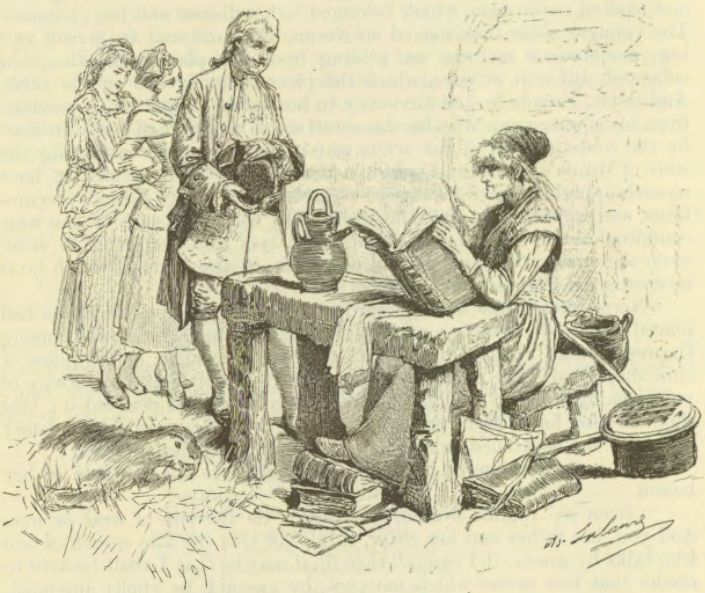
"Thy daughter's health?" answered Norna; "and what is the maiden's ailment?"

"The physician," said Troil, "must name the disease. All that I can tell thee of it is——"

"Be silent," said Norna, interrupting him; "I know all thou canst tell me, and more than thou thyself knowest. Sit down, all of you;

and, thou, maiden," she said, addressing Minna, "sit thou in that chair," pointing to the place she had just left, "once the seat of Giervada, at whose voice the stars hid their beams, and the moon herself grew pale."

Minna moved with slow and tremulous step towards the rude seat thus indicated to her. It was composed of stone, formed into some semblance of a chair by the rough and unskilful hand of some ancient Gothic artist.



"'I give you good e'en, cousin Norna; my daughters and I have come far to see you'" (p. 309).

Brenda, creeping as close as possible to her father, seated herself along with him upon a bench at some distance from Minna, and kept her eyes, with a mixture of fear, pity, and anxiety, closely fixed upon her. It would be difficult altogether to decipher the emotions by which this amiable and affectionate girl was agitated at the moment. Deficient in her sister's predominating quality of high imagination, and little credulous, of course, to the marvellous, she could not but entertain some vague and indefinite fears on her own account, concerning the nature of the scene which was soon to take place. But these were in a manner swallowed up in her apprehensions on the score of her sister, who, with a

frame so much weakened, spirits so much exhausted, and a mind so susceptible of the impressions which all around her was calculated to excite, now sat pensively resigned to the agency of one whose treatment might produce the most baneful effects upon such a subject.

Brenda gazed at Minna, who sat in that rude chair of dark stone, her finely formed shape and limbs making the strongest contrast with its ponderous and irregular angles, her cheek and lips as pale as clay, and her eyes turned upward, and lighted with the mixture of resignation and excited enthusiasm which belonged to her disease and her character. The younger sister then looked on Norna, who muttered to herself in a low, monotonous manner, as, gliding from one place to another, she collected different articles, which she placed one by one on the table. And lastly, Brenda looked anxiously to her father, to gather, if possible, from his countenance whether he entertained any part of her own fears for the consequences of the scene which was to ensue, considering the state of Minna's health and spirits. But Magnus Troil seemed to have no such apprehensions; he viewed with stern composure Norna's preparations, and appeared to wait the event with the composure of one who, confiding in the skill of a medical artist, sees him preparing to enter upon some important and painful operation, in the issue of which he is interested by friendship or by affection.

Norna, meanwhile, went onward with her preparations, until she had placed on the stone table a variety of miscellaneous articles, and among the rest a small chafing-dish full of charcoal, a crucible, and a piece of thin sheet-lead. She then spoke aloud: "It is well that I was aware of your coming hither; ay, long before you yourself had resolved it; how should I else have been prepared for that which is now to be done? Maiden," she continued, addressing Minna, "where lies thy pain?"

The patient answered by pressing her hand to the left side of her bosom.

"Even so," replied Norna, "even so; 'tis the site of weal or woe. And you, her father and her sister, think not this the idle speech of one who talks by guess; if I can tell thee ill, it may be that I shall be able to render that less severe which may not, by any aid, be wholly amended. The heart—ay, the heart—touch that, and the eye grows dim, the pulse fails, the wholesome stream of our blood is choked and troubled, our limbs decay like sapless seaweed in a summer's sun; our better views of existence are past and gone; what remains is the dream of lost happiness or the fear of inevitable evil. But the Reimkennar must to her work; well it is that I have prepared the means."

She threw off her long dark-coloured mantle, and stood before them in her short jacket of light-blue wadmaal, with its skirt of the same stuff, fancifully embroidered with black velvet, and bound at the waist with a chain or girdle of silver, formed into singular devices. Norna next undid the fillet which bound her grizzled hair, and shaking her head wildly, caused it to fall in dishevelled abundance over her face and

around her shoulders, so as almost entirely to hide her features. She then placed a small crucible on the chafing-dish already mentioned, dropped a few drops from a vial on the charcoal below, pointed towards it her wrinkled forefinger, which she had previously moistened with liquid from another small bottle, and said, with a deep voice, "Fire, do thy duty;" and the words were no sooner spoken than, probably by some chemical combination of which the spectators were not aware, the charcoal which was under the crucible became slowly ignited; while Norna, as if impatient of the delay, threw hastily back her disordered tresses, and, while her features reflected the sparkles and red light of the fire, and her eyes flashed from amongst her hair like those of a wild animal from its cover, blew fiercely till the whole was in an intense glow. She paused a moment from her toil, and, muttering that the elemental spirit must be thanked, recited, in her usual monotonous, yet wild mode of chanting, the following verses:—

"Thou so needful, yet so dread,
With cloudy crest, and wing of red;
Thou, without whose genial breath
The North would sleep the sleep of death;
Who deign'st to warm the cottage hearth,
Yet hurl'st proud palaces to earth,—
Brightest, keenest of the Powers
Which form and rule this world of ours,
With my rhyme of Runic, I
Thank thee for thy agency."

She then severed a portion from the small mass of sheet-lead which lay upon the table, and, placing it in the crucible, subjected it to the action of the lighted charcoal, and, as it melted, she sung,—

"Old Reimkennar, to thy art
Mother Hertha sends her part;
She, whose gracious bounty gives
Needful food for all that lives.
From the deep mine of the North,
Came the mystic metal forth,
Doom'd, amidst disjointed stones,
Long to cere a champion's bones,
Disinhumed my charms to aid—
Mother Earth, my thanks are paid."

She then poured out some water from the jar into a large cup or goblet, and sung once more, as she slowly stirred it round with the end of her staff,—

"Girdle of our islands dear,
Element of Water, hear!
Thou whose power can overwhelm
Broken mounds and ruin'd realm
On the lonely Belgian strand;
All thy fiercest rage can never
Of our soil a furlong sever
From our rock-defended land;
Play then gently thou thy part,
To assist old Norna's art."

She then, with a pair of pincers, removed the crucible from the chafing-dish, and poured the lead, now entirely melted, into the bowl of water, repeating at the same time,—

> "Elements, each other greeting,
> Gifts and powers attend your meeting!"

The melted lead, spattering as it fell into the water, formed, of course, the usual combination of irregular forms which is familiar to all who in childhood have made the experiment, and from which, according to our childish fancy, we may have selected portions bearing some resemblance to domestic articles—the tools of mechanics or the like. Norna seemed to busy herself in some such researches, for she examined the mass of lead with scrupulous attention, and detached it into different portions, without apparently being able to find a fragment in the form which she desired.

At length she again muttered, rather as speaking to herself than to her guests, "He, the View-less, will not be omitted; he will have his tribute even in the work to which he gives nothing. Stern compeller of the clouds, thou also shalt hear the voice of the Reimkennar."

Thus speaking, Norna once more threw the lead into the crucible, where, hissing and spattering as the wet metal touched the sides of the red-hot vessel, it was soon again reduced into a state of fusion. The sibyl, meantime, turned to a corner of the apartment, and opening suddenly a window which looked to the north-west, let in the fitful radiance of the sun, now lying almost level upon a great mass of red clouds, which, boding future tempest, occupied the edge of the horizon, and seemed to brood over the billows of the boundless sea. Turning to this quarter, from which a low, hollow moaning breeze then blew, Norna addressed the Spirit of the Winds, in tones which seemed to resemble his own,—

> "Thou, that over billows dark
> Safely send'st the fisher's bark,
> Giving him a path and motion
> Through the wilderness of ocean;
> Thou, that when the billows brave ye,
> O'er the shelves canst drive the navy,
> Did'st thou chafe as one neglected,
> While thy brethren were respected?
> To appease thee, see, I tear
> This full grasp of grizzled hair;
> Oft thy breath hath through it sung,
> Softening to my magic tongue;
> Now, tis thine to bid it fly
> Through the wide expanse of sky,
> 'Mid the countless swarms to sail
> Of wild-fowl wheeling on thy gale;
> Take thy portion and rejoice,—
> Spirit, thou hast heard my voice!"

Norna accompanied these words with the action which they

described, tearing a handful of hair with vehemence from her head, and strewing it upon the wind as she continued her recitation. She then shut the casement, and again involved the chamber in the dubious twilight which best suited her character and occupation. The melted lead was once more emptied into the water, and the various whimsical conformations which it received from the operation were examined with great care by the sibyl, who at length seemed to intimate, by voice and gesture, that her spell had been successful. She selected from the fused metal a piece about the size of a small nut, bearing in shape a

"She knotted the leaden heart to a chain of gold, and hung it around Minna's neck" (p. 317).

close resemblance to that of the human heart, and, approaching Minna, again spoke in song,—

"She who sits by haunted well
Is subject to the Nixie's spell;
She who walks on lonely beach
To the Mermaid's charmèd speech;
She who walks round ring of green
Offends the peevish Fairy Queen;
And she who takes rest in the Dwarfie's cave,
A weary weird of woe shall have.

"By ring, by spring, by cave, by shore,
Minna Troil has braved all this and more:
And yet hath the root of her sorrow and ill
A source that's more deep and more mystical still."

Minna, whose attention had been latterly something disturbed by reflections on her own secret sorrow, now suddenly recalled it, and looked eagerly on Norna as if she expected to learn from her rhymes something of deep interest. The northern sibyl, meanwhile, proceeded to pierce the piece of lead, which bore the form of a heart, and to fix in it a piece of gold wire, by which it might be attached to a chain or necklace. She then proceeded in her rhyme,—

"Thou art within a demon's hold,
More wise than Heims, more strong than Trolld:
No siren sings so sweet as he,
No fay springs lighter on the lea;
No elfin power hath half the art
To soothe, to move, to wring the heart,
Life-blood from the cheek to drain,
Drench the eye, and dry the vein.
Maiden, ere we farther go,
Dost thou note me, ay or no?"

Minna replied in the same rhythmical manner, which, in jest and earnest, was frequently used by the ancient Scandinavians,—

"I mark thee, my mother, both word, look, and sign;
Speak on with the riddle—to read it be mine."

"Now, Heaven and every saint be praised!" said Magnus; "they are the first words to the purpose which she hath spoken these many days."

"And they are the last which she shall speak for many a month," said Norna, incensed at the interruption, "if you again break the progress of my spell. Turn your faces to the wall, and look not hitherward again, under penalty of my severe displeasure. You, Magnus Troil, from hard-hearted audacity of spirit, and you, Brenda, from wanton and idle disbelief in that which is beyond your bounded comprehension, are unworthy to look on this mystic work; and the glance of your eyes mingles with and weakens the spell; for the powers cannot brook distrust."

Unaccustomed to be addressed in a tone so peremptory, Magnus would have made some angry reply; but reflecting that the health of Minna was at stake, and considering that she who spoke was a woman of many sorrows, he suppressed his anger, bowed his head, shrugged his shoulders, assumed the prescribed posture, averting his head from the table, and turning towards the wall. Brenda did the same, on receiving a sign from her father, and both remained profoundly silent.

Norna then addressed Minna once more,—

"Mark me! for the word I speak
Shall bring the colour to thy cheek.
This leaden heart, so light of cost,
The symbol of a treasure lost,

Thou shalt wear in hope and in peace,
That the cause of your sickness and sorrow may cease,
When crimson foot meets crimson hand
In the Martyrs' Aisle, and in Orkney-land."

Minna coloured deeply at the last couplet, intimating, as she failed not to interpret it, that Norna was completely acquainted with the secret cause of her sorrow. The same conviction led the maiden to hope in the favourable issue, which the sibyl seemed to prophesy; and not venturing to express her feelings in any manner more intelligible, she pressed Norna's withered hand with all the warmth of affection, first to her breast and then to her bosom, bedewing it at the same time with her tears.

With more of human feeling than she usually exhibited, Norna extricated her hand from the grasp of the poor girl, whose tears now flowed freely, and then, with more tenderness of manner than she had yet shown, she knotted the leaden heart to a chain of gold, and hung it around Minna's neck, singing, as she performed that last branch of the spell,—

"Be patient, be patient, for Patience hath power
To ward us in danger, like mantle in shower;
A fairy gift you best may hold
In a chain of fairy gold;
The chain and the gift are each a true token,
That not without warrant old Norna has spoken;
But thy nearest and dearest must never behold them,
Till time shall accomplish the truths I have told them."

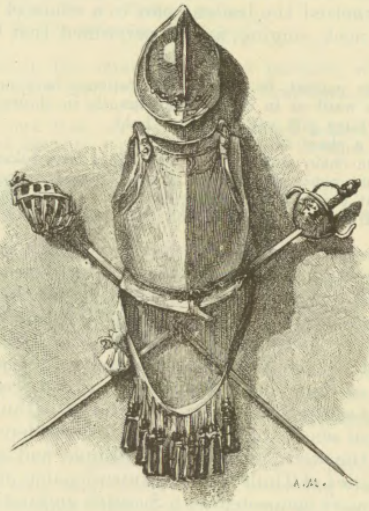
The verses being concluded, Norna carefully arranged the chain around her patient's neck so as to hide it in her bosom, and thus ended the spell—a spell which, at the moment I record these incidents, it is known, has been lately practised in Zetland, where any decline of health, without apparent cause, is imputed by the lower orders to a demon having stolen the heart from the body of the patient, and where the experiment of supplying the deprivation by a leaden one, prepared in the manner described, has been resorted to within these few years. In a metaphorical sense, the disease may be considered as a general one in all parts of the world; but, as this simple and original remedy is peculiar to the isles of Thule, it were unpardonable not to preserve it at length in a narrative connected with Scottish antiquities.*

A second time Norna reminded her patient that if she showed, or spoke of, the fairy gifts, their virtue would be lost; a belief so common as to be received into the superstitions of all nations. Lastly, unbuttoning the collar which she had just fastened, she showed her a link of the gold chain, which Minna instantly recognised as that

* The spells described in this chapter are not altogether imaginary. By this mode of pouring lead into water, and selecting the part which chances to assume a resemblance to the human heart, which must be worn by the patient around her or his neck, the sage persons of Zetland pretend to cure the fatal disorder called the loss of a heart.

formerly given by Norna to Mordaunt Mertoun. This seemed to intimate he was yet alive and under Norna's protection; and she gazed on her with the most eager curiosity. But the sibyl imposed her finger on her lips in token of silence, and a second time involved the chain in those folds which modestly and closely veiled one of the most beautiful, as well as one of the kindest, bosoms in the world.

Norna then extinguished the lighted charcoal, and, as the water hissed upon the glowing embers, commanded Magnus and Brenda to look around, and behold her task accomplished.



CHAPTER XXIX.

"See yonder woman, whom our swains revere,
And dread in secret, while they take her counsel
When sweetheart shall be kind, or when cross dame shall die;
Where lurks the thief who stole the silver tankard,
And how the pestilent murrain may be cured.
This sage adviser's mad, stark mad, my friend;
Yet, in her madness, hath the art and cunning
To wring fools' secrets from their inmost bosoms,
And pay inquirers with the coin they gave her."

Old Play.

IT seemed as if Norna had indeed full right to claim the gratitude of the Udaller for the improved condition of his daughter's health. She once more threw open the window, and Minna, drying her eyes, and advancing with affectionate confidence, threw herself on her father's neck, and asked his forgiveness for the trouble she had of late occasioned to him. It is unnecessary to add that this was at once granted, with a full, though rough burst of parental tenderness, and as many close embraces as if his child had been just rescued from the jaws of death. When Magnus had dismissed Minna from his arms, to throw herself into those of her sister, and express to her, rather by kisses and tears than in words, the regret she entertained for her late wayward conduct, the Udaller thought proper, in the meantime, to pay his thanks to their hostess, whose skill had proved so efficacious. But scarce had he come out with, "Much respected kinswoman, I am but a plain old Norseman,"—when she interrupted him, by pressing her finger on her lips.

"There are those around us," she said, "who must hear no mortal voice, witness no sacrifice to mortal feelings; there are times when they mutiny even against me, their sovereign mistress, because I am still shrouded in the flesh of humanity. Fear, therefore, and be silent. I, whose deeds have raised me from the low-sheltered valley of life, where dwell its social wants and common charities—I, who have bereft the Giver of the Gift which he gave, and stand alone on a cliff of immeasurable height, detached from earth, save from the small portion that supports my miserable tread—I alone am fit to cope with those sullen mates. Fear not, therefore, but yet be not too bold, and let this night to you be one of fasting and of prayer."

If the Udaller had not, before the commencement of the operation, been disposed to dispute the commands of the sibyl, it may be well believed he was less so now that it had terminated to all appearance so fortunately. So he sat down in silence, and seized upon a volume which lay near him as a sort of desperate effort to divert *ennui*, for on no other occasion had Magnus been known to have recourse to a book for that purpose. It chanced to be a book much to his mind, being the well-known work of Olaus Magnus, upon the manners of the ancient Northern nations. The book is unluckily in the Latin language, and the Danske or Dutch were, either of them, much more familiar to the Udaller. But then it was the fine edition published in 1555, which contains representations of the war-chariots, fishing exploits, warlike exercises, and domestic employments of the Scandinavians, executed on copperplates; and thus the information which the work refused to the understanding was addressed to the eye, which, as is well known both to old and young, answers the purpose of amusement as well, if not better.

Meanwhile the two sisters, pressed as close to each other as two flowers on the same stalk, sat with their arms reciprocally passed over each other's shoulder, as if they feared some new and unforeseen cause of coldness was about to separate them, and interrupt the sister-like harmony which had been but just restored. Norna sat opposite to them, sometimes revolving the large parchment volume with which they had found her employed at their entrance, and sometimes gazing on the sisters with a fixed look, in which an interest of a kind unusually tender seemed occasionally to disturb the stern and rigorous solemnity of her countenance. All was still and silent as death, and the subsiding emotions of Brenda had not yet permitted her to wonder whether the remaining hours of the evening were to be passed in the same manner, when the scene of tranquillity was suddenly interrupted by the entrance of the dwarf Pacolet, or, as the Udaller called him, Nicholas Strumpfer.

Norna darted an angry glance on the intruder, who seemed to deprecate her resentment by holding up his hands and uttering a babbling sound; then, instantly resorting to his usual mode of conversation, he expressed himself by a variety of signs made rapidly upon

"The scene of tranquillity was suddenly interrupted by the entrance of the dwarf Pacolet" (p. 320).

his fingers, and as rapidly answered by his mistress, so that the young women, who had never heard of such an art, and now saw it practised by two beings so singular, almost conceived their mutual intelligence the work of enchantment. When they had ceased their intercourse, Norna turned to Magnus Troil with much haughtiness, and said, "How, my kinsman? Have you so far forgot yourself as to bring earthly food into the house of the Reimkennar, and make preparations in the dwelling of Power and of Despair for refection and wassail and revelry? Speak not—answer not," she said; "the duration of the cure which was wrought even now depends on your silence and obedience; bandy but a single look or word with me, and the latter condition of that maiden shall be worse than the first!"

This threat was an effectual charm upon the tongue of the Udaller, though he longed to indulge it in vindication of his conduct.

"Follow me, all of you," said Norna, striding to the door of the apartment, "and see that no one looks backwards; we leave not this apartment empty, though we, the children of mortality, be removed from it."

She went out, and the Udaller signed to his daughters to follow, and to obey her injunctions. The sibyl moved swifter than her guests down the rude descent (such it might rather be termed, than a proper staircase) which led to the lower apartment. Magnus and his daughters, when they entered the chamber, found their own attendants aghast at the presence and proceedings of Norna of the Fitful Head.

They had been previously employed in arranging the provisions which they had brought along with them, so as to present a comfortable cold meal, as soon as the appetite of the Udaller, which was as regular as the return of tide, should induce him to desire some refreshment; and now they stood staring in fear and surprise, while Norna, seizing upon one article after another, and well supported by the zealous activity of Pacolet, flung their whole preparations out of the rude aperture which served for a window, and over the cliff, from which the ancient Burgh arose, into the ocean, which raged and foamed beneath. *Vifda* (dried beef), hams, and pickled pork flew after each other into empty space, smoked geese were restored to the air, and cured fish to the sea, their native elements indeed, but which they were no longer capable of traversing; and the devastation proceeded so rapidly that the Udaller could scarce secure from the wreck his silver drinking cup; while the large leathern flask of brandy, which was destined to supply his favourite beverage, was sent to follow the rest of the supper by the hands of Pacolet, who regarded, at the same time, the disappointed Udaller with a malicious grin, as if, notwithstanding his own natural taste for the liquor, he enjoyed the disappointment and surprise of Magnus Troil still more than he would have relished sharing his enjoyment.

The destruction of the brandy flask exhausted the patience of Magnus, who roared out, in a tone of no small displeasure, "Why,

kinswoman, this is wasteful madness; where, and on what, would you have us sup?"

"Where you will," answered Norna, "and on what you will; but not in my dwelling, and not on the food with which you have profaned it. Vex my spirit no more, but begone every one of you! You have been here too long for my good, perhaps for your own."

"How, kinswoman," said Magnus, "would you make outcasts of us at this time of night, when even a Scotchman would not turn a stranger from the door? Bethink you, dame, it is shame on our lineage for ever, if this squall of yours should force us to slip cables, and go to sea so scantily provided."

"Be silent, and depart," said Norna; "let it suffice you have got that for which you came. I have no harbourage for mortal guests, no provision to relieve human wants. There is beneath the cliff a beach of the finest sand, a stream of water as pure as the well of Kildinguie, and the rocks bear dulse as wholesome as that of Guiodin; and well you wot, that the well of Kildinguie and the dulse of Guiodin will cure all maladies save Black Death."*

"And well I wot," said the Udaller, "that I would eat corrupted seaweeds like a starling, or salted seal's flesh like the men of Burraforth, or wilks, buckies, and lampits, like the poor sneaks of Stroma, rather than break wheat bread and drink red wine in a house where it is begrudged me. And yet," he said, checking himself, "I am wrong, very wrong, my cousin, to speak thus to you, and I should rather thank you for what you have done, than upbraid you for following your own ways. But I see you are impatient; we will be all under way presently. And you, ye knaves," addressing his servants, "that were in such hurry with your service before it was lacked, get out of doors with you presently, and manage to catch the ponies; for I see we must make for another harbour to-night, if we would not sleep with an empty stomach, and on a hard bed."

The domestics of Magnus, already sufficiently alarmed at the violence of Norna's conduct, scarce waited the imperious command of their master to evacuate her dwelling with all dispatch; and the Udaller, with a daughter on each arm, was in the act of following them, when Norna said emphatically, "Stop!" They obeyed, and again turned towards her. She held out her hand to Magnus, which the placable Udaller instantly folded in his own ample palm.

"Magnus," she said, "we part by necessity, but, I trust, not in anger?"

"Surely not, cousin," said the warm-hearted Udaller, well-nigh stammering in his hasty disclamation of all unkindness,—"most assuredly not. I never bear ill-will to any one, much less to one of my own blood, and who has piloted me with her advice through many a rough tide, as I would pilot a boat betwixt Swona and Stroma, through all the waws, wells, and swelchies of the Pentland Frith."

* So at least says an Orkney proverb.

"Enough," said Norna; "and now farewell, with such a blessing as I dare bestow—not a word more! Maidens," she added, "draw near, and let me kiss your brows."

The sibyl was obeyed by Minna with awe, and by Brenda with fear; the one overmastered by the warmth of her imagination, the other by the natural timidity of her constitution. Norna then dismissed them, and in two minutes afterwards they found themselves beyond the bridge, and standing upon the rocky platform in front of the ancient Pictish Burgh, which it was the pleasure of this sequestered female to inhabit. The night, for it was now fallen, was unusually serene. A bright twilight, which glimmered far over the surface of the sea, supplied the brief absence of the summer's sun, and the waves seemed to sleep under its influence, so faint and slumberous was the sound with which one after another rolled on and burst against the foot of the cliff on which they stood. In front of them stood the rugged fortress, seeming, in the uniform greyness of the atmosphere, as aged, as shapeless, and as massive as the rock on which it was founded. There was neither sight nor sound that indicated human habitation, save that from one rude shot-hole glimmered the flame of the feeble lamp by which the sibyl was probably pursuing her mystical and nocturnal studies, shooting upon the twilight, in which it was soon lost and confounded, a single line of tiny light; bearing the same proportion to that of the atmosphere as the aged woman and her serf, the sole inhabitants of that desert, did to the solitude with which they were surrounded.

"He laughed till his very eyes ran over" (p. 326).

For several minutes the party, thus suddenly and unexpectedly expelled from the shelter where they had reckoned upon spending the night, stood in silence, each wrapt in their own separate reflections. Minna, her thoughts fixed on the mystical consolation which she had received, in vain endeavoured to extract from the words of Norna a more

distinct and intelligible meaning; and the Udaller had not yet recovered his surprise at the extrusion to which he had been thus whimsically subjected, under circumstances that prohibited him from resenting as an insult treatment which, in all other respects, was so shocking to the genial hospitality of his nature, that he still felt like one disposed to be angry, if he but knew how to set about it. Brenda was the first who brought matters to a point, by asking whither they were to go, and how they were to spend the night? The question, which was asked in a tone that, amidst its simplicity, had something dolorous in it, entirely changed the train of her father's ideas; and the unexpected perplexity of their situation now striking him in a comic point of view, he laughed till his very eyes ran over, while every rock around him rang, and the sleeping sea-fowl were startled from their repose by the loud, hearty explosions of his obstreperous hilarity.

The Udaller's daughters, eagerly representing to their father the risk of displeasing Norna by this unlimited indulgence of his mirth, united their efforts to drag him to a farther distance from her dwelling. Magnus, yielding to their strength, which, feeble as it was, his own fit of laughter rendered him incapable of resisting, suffered himself to be pulled to a considerable distance from the Burgh, and then escaping from their hands, and sitting down, or rather suffering himself to drop, upon a large stone which lay conveniently by the wayside, he again laughed so long and lustily that his vexed and anxious daughters became afraid that there was something more than natural in these repeated convulsions.

At length his mirth exhausted both itself and the Udaller's strength. He groaned heavily, wiped his eyes, and said, not without feeling some desire to renew his obstreperous cachinnation, "Now, by the bones of Saint Magnus, my ancestor and namesake, one would imagine that being turned out of doors, at this time of night, was nothing short of an absolutely exquisite jest; for I have shaken my sides at it till they ache. There we sat, made snug for the night, and I made as sure of a good supper and a can as ever I had been of either, and here we are all taken aback! And then poor Brenda's doleful voice and melancholy question, of 'What is to be done, and where are we to sleep?' In good faith, unless one of those knaves, who must needs torment the poor woman by their trencher-work before it was wanted, can make amends by telling us of some snug port under our lee, we have no other course for it but to steer through the twilight on the bearing of Burgh-Westra, and rough it out as well as we can by the way. I am sorry but for you, girls; for many a cruise have I been upon when we were on shorter allowance than we are like to have now. I would I had but secured a morsel for you, and a drop for myself; and then there had been but little to complain of."

Both sisters hastened to assure the Udaller that they felt not the least occasion for food.

"Why, that is well," said Magnus: "and so being the case, I will not complain of my own appetite, though it is sharper than convenient. And the rascal, Nicholas Strumpfer, what a leer the villain gave me as he started the good Nantz into the salt-water! He grinned, the knave, like a seal on a skerry. Had it not been for vexing my poor kinswoman Norna, I would have sent his misbegotten body, and misshapen jolter-head, after my bonny flask, as sure as Saint Magnus lies at Kirkwall!"

By this time the servants returned with the ponies, which they had very soon caught, these sensible animals finding nothing so captivating in the pastures, where they had been suffered to stray, as inclined them to resist the invitation again to subject themselves to saddle and bridle. The prospects of the party were also considerably improved by learning that the contents of their sumpter pony's burden had not been entirely exhausted, a small basket having fortunately escaped the rage of Norna and Pacolet by the rapidity with which one of the servants had caught up and removed it. The same domestic, an alert and ready-witted fellow, had observed upon the beach, not above three miles distant from the Burgh, and about a quarter of a mile off their straight path, a deserted *Skio*, or fisherman's hut, and suggested that they should occupy it for the rest of the night, in order that the ponies might be refreshed, and the young ladies spend the night under cover from the raw evening air.

When we are delivered from great and serious dangers our mood is, or ought to be, grave, in proportion to the peril we have escaped, and the gratitude due to protecting Providence. But few things raise the spirits more naturally, or more harmlessly, than when means of extrication from any of the lesser embarrassments of life are suddenly presented to us; and such was the case in the present instance. The Udaller, relieved from the apprehensions for his daughters suffering from fatigue, and himself from too much appetite and too little food, carolled Norse ditties, as he spurred Bergen through the twilight, with as much glee and gallantry as if the night-ride had been entirely a matter of his own free choice. Brenda lent her voice to some of his choruses, which were echoed in ruder notes by the servants, who, in that simple state of society, were not considered as guilty of any breach of respect by mingling their voices with the song. Minna, indeed, was as yet unequal to such an effort; but she compelled herself to assume some share in the general hilarity of the meeting; and, contrary to her conduct since the fatal morning which concluded the Festival of Saint John, she seemed to take her usual interest in what was going on around her, and answered with kindness and readiness the repeated inquiries concerning her health, with which the Udaller every now and then interrupted his carol. And thus they proceeded by night, a happier party by far than they had been when they traced the same route on the preceding morning, making light of the difficulties of the way, and promising themselves shelter and a comfortable night's rest in the deserted hut

which they were now about to approach, and which they expected to find in a state of darkness and solitude.

But it was the lot of the Udaller that day to be deceived more than once in his calculations.

"And which way lies this cabin of yours, Laurie?" said the Udaller, addressing the intelligent domestic of whom we just spoke.

"Yonder it should be," said Laurence Scholey, "at the head of the voe; but, by my faith, if it be the place, there are folk there before us. God and Saint Ronan send that they be canny company!"

In truth there was a light in the deserted hut, strong enough to glimmer through every chink of the shingles and wreck-wood of which it was constructed, and to give the whole cabin the appearance of a smithy seen by night. The universal superstition of the Zetlanders seized upon Magnus and his escort.

"They are trows," said one voice.

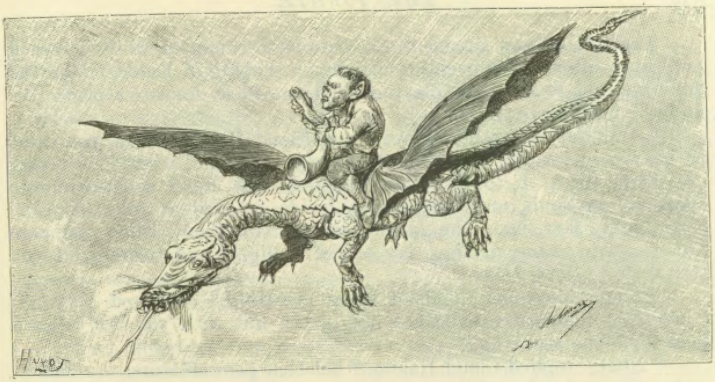
"They are witches," murmured another.

"They are mermaids," muttered a third; "only hear their wild singing!"

All stopped; and, in effect, some notes of music were audible, which Brenda, with a voice that quivered a little, but yet had a turn of arch ridicule in its tone, pronounced to be the sound of a fiddle.

"Fiddle or fiend," said the Udaller, who, if he believed in such nightly apparitions as had struck terror into his retinue, certainly feared them not, "fiddle or fiend, may the devil fetch me if a witch cheats me out of supper to-night for the second time!"

So saying, he dismounted, clenched his trusty truncheon in his hand, and advanced towards the hut, followed by Laurence alone; the rest of his retinue continuing stationary on the beach beside his daughters and the ponies.



CHAPTER XXX.

"What ho, my jovial mates! come on! we'll frolic it
Like fairies frisking in the merry moonshine,
Seen by the curtal friar, who, from some christening,
Or some blithe bridal, hies belated cell-ward—
He starts, and changes his bold bottle swagger
To churchman's pace professional, and, ransacking
His treacherous memory for some holy hymn,
Finds but the roundel of the midnight catch."

Old Play.

THE stride of the Udaller relaxed nothing of its length or of its firmness as he approached the glimmering cabin, from which he now heard distinctly the sound of the fiddle. But, if still long and firm, his steps succeeded each other rather more slowly than usual; for, like a cautious though a brave general, Magnus was willing to reconnoitre his enemy before assailing him. The trusty Laurence Scholey, who kept close behind his master, now whispered into his ear, "So help me, sir, as I believe that the ghaist, if ghaist it be, that plays so bravely on the fiddle, must be the ghaist of Maister Claud Halcro, or his wraith at least; for never was bow drawn across thairm which brought out the gude auld spring of 'Fair and Lucky' so like his ain."

Magnus was himself much of the same opinion; for he knew the blithe minstrelsy of the spirited little old man, and hailed the hut with a hearty hilloah, which was immediately replied to by the cheery note of his ancient messmate, and Halcro himself presently made his appearance on the beach.

The Udaller now signed to his retinue to come up, while he asked his friend, after a kind greeting and much shaking of hands, "How the devil he came to sit there, playing old tunes in so desolate a place, like an owl whooping to the moon?"

"And tell me rather, Fowd," said Claud Halcro, "how you came to be within hearing of me? ay, by my word, and with your bonny daughters, too? Jarto Minna and Jarto Brenda, I bid you welcome to these yellow sands, and there shake hands, as glorious John, or some other body, says, upon the same occasion. And how came you here like two fair swans, making day out of twilight, and turning all you step upon to silver?"

"You shall know all about them presently," answered Magnus; "but what messmates have you got in the hut with you? I think I hear some one speaking."

"None," replied Claud Halcro, "but that poor creature, the Factor, and my imp of a boy Giles. I—but come in, come in; here you will find us starving in comfort; not so much as a mouthful of sour sillocks to be had for love or money."

"That may be in a small part helped," said the Udaller; "for though the best of our supper is gone over the Fitful Crags to the sealchies and the dog-fish, yet we have got something in the kit still. Here, Laurie, bring up the *vifda*."

"*Jokul, Jokul!*"* was Laurence's joyful answer; and he hastened for the basket.

"By the Bicker of Saint Magnus,"† said Halcro, "and the burliest bishop that ever quaffed it for luck's sake, there is no finding your locker empty, Magnus! I believe sincerely that ere a friend wanted, you could, like old Luggie the warlock, fish up boiled and roasted out of the pool of Kibster."‡

"You are wrong there, Jarto Claud," said Magnus Troil, "for far from helping me to a supper, the foul fiend, I believe, has carried off great part of mine this blessed evening; but you are welcome to share and share of what is left." This was said while the party entered the hut.

Here, in a cabin which smelled strongly of dried fish, and whose sides and roof were jet-black with smoke, they found the unhappy Triptolemus Yellowley seated beside a fire made of dried seaweed, mingled with some peats and wreck-wood; his sole companion a

* *Jokul*, yes, sir; a Norse expression, still in common use.

† The Bicker of Saint Magnus, a vessel of enormous dimensions, was preserved at Kirkwall, and presented to each Bishop of the Orkneys. If the new incumbent was able to quaff it out at one draught, which was a task for Hercules or Rorie Mhor of Dunvegan, the omen boded a crop of unusual fertility.

‡ Luggie, a famous conjurer, was wont, when storms prevented him from going to his usual employment of fishing, to angle over a steep rock, at the place called, from his name, Luggie's Knoll. At other times he drew up dressed food while they were out at sea, of which his comrades partook boldly from natural courage, without caring who stood cook. The poor man was finally condemned and burnt at Scalloway.

barefooted, yellow-haired Zetland boy, who acted occasionally as a kind of page to Claud Halcro, bearing his fiddle on his shoulder, saddling his pony, and rendering him similar duties of kindly observance. The disconsolate agriculturist, for such his visage betokened him, displayed little surprise and less animation at the arrival of the Udaller and his companions, until, after the party had drawn close to the fire (a neighbourhood which the dampness of the night air rendered far from disagreeable), the pannier was opened, and a tolerable supply of barley-bread and hung beef, besides a flask of brandy (no doubt smaller than that which the relentless hand of Pacolet had emptied into the ocean), gave assurances of a tolerable supper. Then, indeed, the worthy Factor grinned, chuckled, rubbed his hands, and inquired after all friends at Burgh-Westra.

When they had all partaken of this needful refreshment, the Udaller repeated his inquiries of Halcro, and more particularly of the Factor, how they came to be nestled in such a remote corner at such an hour of the night.

"Maister Magnus Troil," said Triptolemus, when a second cup had given him spirits to tell his tale of woe, "I would not have you think that it is a little thing that disturbs me. I came of that grain that takes a sair wind to shake it. I have seen many a Martinmas and many a Whitsunday in my day, whilk are the times peculiarly grievous to those of my craft, and I could aye bide the bang; but I think I am like to be dung ower a'thegither in this damned country of yours—Gude forgie me for swearing—but evil communication corrupteth good manners."

"Now, Heaven guide us," said the Udaller, "what is the matter with the man? Why, man, if you will put your plough into new land, you must look to have it hank on a stone now and then. You must set us an example of patience, seeing you come here for our improvement."

"And the deil was in my feet when I did so," said the Factor. "I had better have set myself to improve the cairn on Clochnaben."

"But what is it, after all," said the Udaller, "that has befallen you? What is it that you complain of?"

"Of everything that has chanced to me since I landed on this island, which I believe was accursed at the very Creation," said the agriculturist, "and assigned as a fitting station for sorners, thieves, whores (I beg the ladies' pardon), witches, bitches, and all evil spirits!"

"By my faith, a goodly catalogue!" said Magnus; "and there has been the day that if I had heard you give out the half of it, I should have turned improver myself, and have tried to amend your manners with a cudgel."

"Bear with me," said the Factor, "Maister Fowd, or Maister Udaller, or whatever else they may call you, and as you are strong be pitiful, and consider the luckless lot of any inexperienced person who lights upon this earthly paradise of yours. He asks for drink, they

bring him sour whey—no disparagement to your brandy, Fowd, which is excellent. You ask for meat, and they bring you sour sillocks that Satan might choke upon. You call your labourers together, and bid them work; it proves Saint Magnus' day, or Saint Ronan's day, or some infernal saint or other's; or else, perhaps, they have come out of bed with the wrong foot foremost, or they have seen an owl, or a rabbit has crossed their path, or they have dreamed of a roasted horse—in short, nothing is to be done. Give them a spade, and they work as if it burned their fingers; but set them to dancing, and see when they will tire of funking and flinging!"

"And why should they, poor bodies," said Claud Halcro, "as long as there are good fiddlers to play to them?"

"Ay, ay," said Triptolemus, shaking his head, "you are a proper person to uphold them in such a humour. Well, to proceed: I till a piece of my best ground; down comes a sturdy beggar that wants a kailyard, or a plant-a-cruive, as you call it, and he claps down an enclosure in the middle of my bit shot of corn, as lightly as if he was baith laird and tenant; and, gainsay him wha likes, there he dibbles in his kail-plants! I sit down to my sorrowful dinner, thinking to have peace and quietness there at least; when in comes one, two, three, four, or half-a-dozen skelping long lads, from some foolery or anither, misca' me for barring my ain door against them, and eat up the best half of what my sister's providence—and she is not over bountiful—has allotted for my dinner! Then enters a witch, with an ellwand in her hand, and she raises the wind or lays it, whichever she likes, majors up and down my house as if she was mistress of it, and I am bounden to thank Heaven if she carries not the broadside of it away with her!"

"Still," said the Fowd, "this is no answer to my question, how the foul fiend I come to find you at moorings here?"

"Have patience, worthy sir," replied the afflicted Factor, "and listen to what I have to say, for I fancy it will be as well to tell you the whole matter. You must know, I once thought that I had gotten a small godsend, that might have made all these matters easier."

"How! a godsend! Do you mean a wreck, Master Factor?" exclaimed Magnus. "Shame upon you, that should have set example to others!"

"It was no wreck," said the Factor; "but, if you must needs know, it chanced that as I raised a hearthstane in one of the old chambers at Stourburgh (for my sister is minded that there is little use in mair fireplaces about a house than one, and I wanted the stane to knock bear upon), when, what should I light on but a horn full of old coins, silver the maist feck of them, but wi' a bit sprinkling of gold amang them too.* Weel, I thought this was a dainty windfa', and so thought Baby, and we were the mair willing to put up with a place where there were siccan braw nest-eggs; and we slade down the stane cannily over

* Note XIV. Antique Coins found in Zetland.

the horn, which seemed to me to be the very cornucopia, or horn of abundance; and for further security, Baby wad visit the room maybe twenty times in the day, and mysell at an orra time, to the boot of a' that."

"On my word, and a very pretty amusement," said Claud Halcro, "to look over a horn of one's own siller. I question if glorious John Dryden ever enjoyed such a pastime in his life,—I am very sure I never did."

"Yes, but you forget, Jarto Claud," said the Udaller, "that the

"They found the unhappy Triptolemus Yellowley seated beside a fire made of dried seaweed" (p. 330).

Factor was only counting over the money for my Lord the Chamberlain. As he is so keen for his Lordship's rights in whales and wrecks, he would not surely forget him in treasure-trove."

"A-hem! a-hem! a-he—he—hem!" ejaculated Triptolemus, seized at the moment with an awkward fit of coughing; "no doubt, my Lord's right in the matter would have been considered, being in the hand of one, though I say it, as just as can be found in Angus-shire, let alone the Mearns. But mark what happened of late! One day, as I went up to see that all was safe and snug, and just to count out the share that should have been his Lordship's,—for surely the labourer, as one may call the finder, is worthy of his hire; nay, some learned men say, that when the finder, in point of trust and in point of power, representeth

the *dominus*, or lord superior, he taketh the whole; but let that pass, as a kittle question *in apicibus juris*, as we wont to say at Saint Andrews;—well, sir and ladies, when I went to the upper chamber, what should I see but an ugsome, ill-shaped, and most uncouth dwarf, that wanted but hoofs and horns to have made an utter devil of him, counting over the very hornful of siller! I am no timorous man, Master Fowd, but, judging that I should proceed with caution in such a matter, for I had reason to believe that there was devilry in it, I accosted him in Latin, whilk it is maist becoming to speak to aught whilk taketh upon it as a goblin, and conjured him *in nomine*, and so forth, with such words as my poor learning could furnish of a suddenty, whilk, to say truth, were not so many, nor altogether so purely latineezed as might have been, had I not been few years at college, and many at the pleugh. Well, sirs, he started at first, as one that heareth that which he expects not; but presently recovering himself, he wawls on me with his grey een, like a wild-cat, and opens his mouth, whilk resembled the mouth of an oven, for the deil a tongue he had in it that I could spy, and took upon his ugly self altogether the air and bearing of a bull-dog, whilk I have seen loosed at a fair upon a mad staig;* whereupon I was something daunted, and withdrew myself to call upon sister Baby, who fears neither dog nor devil when there is in question the little penny siller. And truly she raise to the fray as I hae seen the Lindsays and Ogilvies bristle up, when Donald MacDonnoch, or the like, made a start down frae the Highlands on the braes of Islay. But an auld useless carline, called Tronda Dronsdaughter (they might call her Drone the sell of her, without farther addition), flung herself right in my sister's gate, and yelloched and skirled, that you would have thought her a whole generation of hounds; whereupon I judged it best to make ae yoking of it, and stop the pleugh until I got my sister's assistance. Whilk when I had done, and we mounted the stair to the apartment in which the said dwarf, devil, or other apparition was to be seen, dwarf, horn, and siller were as clean gane as if the cat had lickit the place where I saw them."

Here Triptolemus paused in his extraordinary narration, while the rest of the party looked upon each other in surprise, and the Udaller muttered to Claud Halcro, "By all tokens, this must have been either the devil or Nicholas Strumpfer; and, if it were him, he is more of a goblin than e'er I gave him credit for, and shall be apt to rate him as such in future." Then, addressing the Factor, he inquired, "Saw ye nought how this dwarf of yours parted company?"

"As I shall answer it, no," replied Triptolemus, with a cautious look around him, as if daunted by the recollection; "neither I, nor Baby, who had her wits more about her, not having seen this unseemly vision, could perceive any way by whilk he made evasion. Only Tronda said she saw him flee forth of the window of the west roundel of the auld

* Young unbroken horse.

house, upon a dragon, as she averred. But, as the dragon is held a fabulous animal, I suld pronounce her averment to rest upon *deceptio visus*."

"But may we not ask farther," said Brenda, stimulated by curiosity to know as much of her cousin Norna's family as was possible, "how all this operated upon Master Yellowley, so as to occasion his being in this place at so unseasonable an hour?"

"Seasonable it must be, Mistress Brenda, since it brought us into your sweet company," answered Claud Halcro, whose mercurial brain far outstripped the slow conceptions of the agriculturist, and who became impatient of being so long silent. "To say the truth, it was I, Mistress Brenda, who recommended to our friend the Factor, whose house I chanced to call at just after this mischance, and where, by the way, owing doubtless to the hurry of their spirits, I was but poorly received, to make a visit to our other friend at Fitful Head, well judging from certain points of the story, at which my other and more particular friend than either" (looking at Magnus) "may chance to form a guess, that they who break a head are the best to find a plaster. And as our friend the Factor scrupled travelling on horseback, in respect of some tumbles from our ponies——"

"Which are incarnate devils," said Triptolemus aloud, muttering under his breath, "like every live thing that I have found in Zetland."

"Well, Fowd," continued Halcro, "I undertook to carry him to Fitful Head in my little boat, which Giles and I can manage as if it were an Admiral's barge full manned; and Master Triptolemus Yellowley will tell you how seaman-like I piloted him to the little haven, within a quarter of a mile of Norna's dwelling."

"I wish to Heaven you had brought me as safe back again," said the Factor.

"Why, to be sure," replied the Minstrel, "I am, as glorious John says—

> 'A daring pilot in extremity,
> Pleased with the danger when the waves go high,
> I seek the storm—but, for a calm unfit,
> Will steer too near the sands, to show my wit.'"

"I showed little wit in intrusting myself to your charge," said Triptolemus; "and you still less when you upset the boat at the throat of the voe, as you call it, when even the poor bairn, that was mair than half drowned, told you that you were carrying too much sail; and then ye wad fasten the rape to the bit stick on the boat-side, that ye might have time to play on the fiddle."

"What!" said the Udaller, "make fast the sheets to the thwart? A most unseasonable practice, Claud Halcro."

"And sae came of it," replied the agriculturist; "for the neist blast (and we are never lang without ane in these parts) whomled us as a gudewife would whomle a bowie, and ne'er a thing wad Maister Halcro

save but his fiddle. The puir bairn swam out like a water-spaniel, and I swattered hard for my life, wi' the help of ane of the oars; and here we are, comfortless creatures, that, till a good wind blew you here, had naething to eat but a mouthful of Norway rusk, that has mair sawdust than ryemeal in it, and tastes liker turpentine than anything else."

"I thought we heard you very merry," said Brenda, "as we came along the beach."

"Ye heard a fiddle, Mistress Brenda," said the Factor; "and maybe ye may think there can be nae dearth, miss, where that is skirling. But then it was Maister Claud Halcro's fiddle, whilk, I am apt to think, wad skirl at his father's deathbed, or at his ain, sae lang as his fingers could pinch the thairm. And it was nae sma' aggravation to my misfortune to have him bumming a' sorts of springs, Norse and Scots, Highland and Lawland, English and Italian, in my lug, as if nothing had happened that was amiss, and we all in such stress and perplexity."

"Why, I told you sorrow would never right the boat, Factor," said the thoughtless minstrel, "and I did my best to make you merry; if I failed, it was neither my fault nor my fiddle's. I have drawn my bow across it before glorious John Dryden himself."

"I will hear no stories about glorious John Dryden," answered the Udaller, who dreaded Halcro's narratives as much as Triptolemus did his music; "I will hear nought of him, but one story to every three bowls of punch; it is our old paction, you know. But tell me, instead, what said Norna to you about your errand?"

"Ay, there was anither fine upshot," said Master Yellowley. "She wadna look at us or listen to us; only she bothered our acquaintance, Master Halcro here, who thought he could have sae much to say wi' her, with about a score of questions about your family and household estate, Master Magnus Troil; and when she had gotten a' she wanted out of him, I thought she wad hae dung him ower the craig, like an empty peacod."

"And for yourself?" said the Udaller.

"She wadna listen to my story, nor hear sae much as a word that I had to say," answered Triptolemus; "and sae much for them that seek to witches and familiar spirits!"

"You needed not to have had recourse to Norna's wisdom, Master Factor," said Minna, not unwilling, perhaps, to stop his railing against the friend who had so lately rendered her service; "the youngest child in Orkney could have told you, that fairy treasures, if they are not wisely employed for the good of others, as well as of those to whom they are imparted, do not dwell long with their possessors."

"Your humble servant to command, Mistress Minnie," said Triptolemus; "I thank ye for the hint, and I am blithe that you have gotten your wits—I beg pardon, I meant your health—into the barn-yard again. For the treasure, I neither used nor abused it; they that

live in the house with my sister Baby wad find it hard to do either! And as for speaking of it, whilk they say muckle offends them whom we in Scotland call Good Neighbours, and you call Drows, the face of the auld Norse kings on the coins themselves might have spoken as much about it as ever I did."

"The Factor," said Claud Halcro, not unwilling to seize the opportunity of revenging himself on Triptolemus for disgracing his seamanship and disparaging his music, "the Factor was so scrupulous as to keep the thing quiet even from his master, the Lord Chamberlain; but, now that the matter has ta'en wind, he is likely to have to account

"'The neist blast whomled us as a gudewife would whomle a bowie'" (p. 335).

to his master for that which is no longer in his possession; for the Lord Chamberlain will be in no hurry, I think, to believe the story of the dwarf. Neither do I think" (winking to the Udaller) "that Norna gave credit to a word of so odd a story; and I daresay that was the reason that she received us, I must needs say, in a very dry manner. I rather think she knew that Triptolemus, our friend here, had found some other hiding-hole for the money, and that the story of the goblin was all his own invention. For my part, I will never believe there was such a dwarf to be seen as the creature Master Yellowley describes, until I set my own eyes on him."

"Then you may do so at this moment," said the Factor; "for by——" (he muttered a deep asseveration as he sprung on his feet in great horror), "there the creature is!"

All turned their eyes in the direction in which he pointed, and saw the hideous misshapen figure of Pacolet, with his eyes fixed and glaring at them through the smoke. He had stolen upon their conversation unperceived, until the Factor's eye lighted upon him in the manner we have described. There was something so ghastly in his sudden and unexpected appearance, that even the Udaller, to whom his form was familiar, could not help starting. Neither pleased with himself for having testified this degree of emotion, however slight, nor with the dwarf who had given cause to it, Magnus asked him sharply, what was his business there? Pacolet replied by producing a letter, which he gave to the Udaller, uttering a sound resembling the word *Shogh.**

"That is the Highlandman's language," said the Udaller; "didst thou learn that, Nicholas, when you lost your own?"

Pacolet nodded, and signed to him to read his letter.

That is no such easy matter by firelight, my good friend," replied the Udaller; "but it may concern Minna, and we must try."

Brenda offered her assistance, but the Udaller answered, "No, no, my girl; Norna's letters must be read by those they are written to. Give the knave, Strumpfer, a drop of brandy the while, though he little deserves it at my hands, considering the grin with which he sent the good Nantz down the crag this morning, as if it had been as much ditch-water."

"Will you be this honest gentleman's cup-bearer, his Ganymede, friend Yellowley, or shall I?" said Claud Halcro aside to the Factor; while Magnus Troil, having carefully wiped his spectacles, which he produced from a large copper case, had disposed them on his nose, and was studying the epistle of Norna.

"I would not touch him, or go near him, for all the Carse of Gowrie," said the Factor, whose fears were by no means entirely removed, though he saw that the dwarf was received as a creature of flesh and blood by the rest of the company; "but I pray you to ask him what he has done with my horn of coins?"

The dwarf, who heard the question, threw back his head, and displayed his enormous throat, pointing to it with his finger.

"Nay, if he has swallowed them there is no more to be said," replied the Factor; "only I hope he will thrive on them as a cow on wet clover. He is dame Norna's servant; it's like such man, such mistress! But if theft and witchcraft are to go unpunished in this land my lord must find another factor; for I have been used to live in a country where men's worldly gear was keepit from infang and outfang thief, as well as their immortal souls from the claws of the deil and his cummers, sain and save us!"

The agriculturist was perhaps the less reserved in expressing his complaints, that the Udaller was for the present out of hearing, having drawn Claud Halcro apart into another corner of the hut.

* In Gaelic, *there.*

"And tell me," said he, "friend Halcro, what errand took thee to Sumburgh, since I reckon it was scarce the mere pleasure of sailing in partnership with yonder barnacle?"

"In faith, Fowd," said the bard, "and if you will have the truth, I went to speak to Norna on your affairs."

"On my affairs?" replied the Udaller; "on what affairs of mine?"

"Just touching your daughter's health. I heard that Norna refused your message, and would not see Eric Scambester. Now, said I to myself, I have scarce joyed in meat, or drink, or music, or aught else, since Jarto Minna has been so ill; and I may say, literally as well as figuratively, that my day and night have been made sorrowful to me. In short, I thought I might have some more interest with old Norna than another, as scalds and wise women were always accounted something akin; and I undertook the journey with the hope to be of some use to my old friend and his lovely daughter."

"And it was most kindly done of you, good warm-hearted Claud," said the Udaller, shaking him warmly by the hand. "I ever said you showed the good old Norse heart amongst all thy fiddling and thy folly. Tut, man, never wince for the matter, but be blithe that thy heart is better than thy head. Well, and I warrant you got no answer from Norna?"

"None to purpose," replied Claud Halcro; "but she held me close to question about Minna's illness, too; and I told her how I had met her abroad the other morning in no very good weather, and how her sister Brenda said she had hurt her foot; in short, I told her all and everything I knew."

"And something more besides, it would seem," said the Udaller; "for I, at least, never heard before that Minna had hurt herself."

"Oh, a scratch; a mere scratch!" said the old man; "but I was startled about it—terrified lest it had been the bite of a dog, or some hurt from a venomous thing. I told all to Norna, however."

"And what," answered the Udaller, "did she say, in the way of reply?"

"She bade me begone about my business, and told me that the issue would be known at the Kirkwall fair; and said just the like to this noodle of a Factor; it was all that either of us got for our labour," said Halcro.

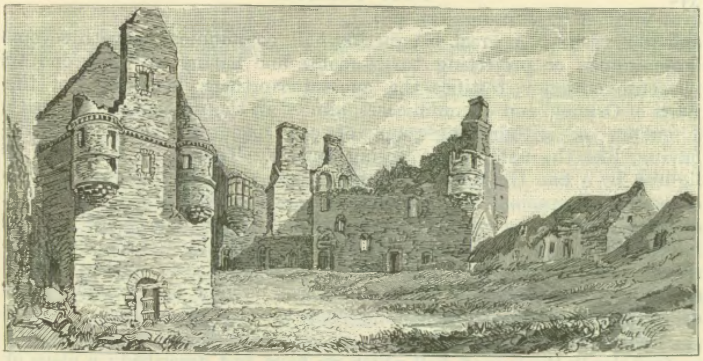
"That is strange," said Magnus. "My kinswoman writes me in this letter not to fail going thither with my daughters. This fair runs strongly in her head; one would think she intended to lead the market, and yet she has nothing to buy or to sell there that I know of. And so you came away as wise as you went, and swamped your boat at the mouth of the voe?"

"Why, how could I help it?" said the poet. "I had set the boy to steer, and as the flaw came suddenly off shore, I could not let go the tack and play on the fiddle at the same time. But it is all well enough;

salt water never harmed Zetlander, so as he could get out of it; and, as Heaven would have it, we were within man's depths of the shore, and, chancing to find this skio, we should have done well enough, with shelter and fire, and are much better than well with your good cheer and good company. But it wears late, and Night and Day must be both as sleepy as old Midnight can make them. There is an inner crib here, where the fishers slept, somewhat fragrant with the smell of their fish, but that is wholesome. They shall bestow themselves there, with the help of what cloaks you have, and then we will have one cup of brandy, and one stave of glorious John, or some little trifle of my own, and so sleep as sound as cobblers."

"Two glasses of brandy, if you please," said the Udaller, "if our stores do not run dry; but not a single stave of glorious John, or of any one else to-night."

And this being arranged and executed agreeably to the peremptory pleasure of the Udaller, the whole party consigned themselves to slumber for the night, and on the next day departed for their several habitations, Claud Halcro having previously arranged with the Udaller that he would accompany him and his daughters on their proposed visit to Kirkwall.



CHAPTER XXXI.

"By this hand, thou think'st me as far in the devil's book as thou and Falstaff, for obduracy and persistency. Let the end try the man. . . . Albeit I could tell to thee, (as to one it pleases me, for fault of a better, to call my friend) I could be sad, and sad indeed too."

Henry IV., Part 2.

WE must now change the scene from Zetland to Orkney, and request our readers to accompany us to the ruins of an elegant though ancient structure, called the Earl's Palace. These remains, though much dilapidated, still exist in the neighbourhood of the massive and venerable pile, which Norwegian devotion dedicated to Saint Magnus the Martyr, and, being contiguous to the Bishop's Palace, which is also ruinous, the place is impressive, as exhibiting vestiges of the mutations both in Church and State which have affected Orkney, as well as countries more exposed to such convulsions. Several parts of these ruinous buildings might be selected (under suitable modifications) as the model of a Gothic mansion, provided architects would be contented rather to imitate what is really beautiful in that species of building, than to make a medley of the caprices of the order, confounding the military, ecclesiastical, and domestic styles of all ages at random, with additional fantasies and combinations of their own device, "all formed out of the builder's brain."

The Earl's Palace forms three sides of an oblong square, and has, even in its ruins, the air of an elegant yet massive structure, uniting, as was usual in the residence of feudal princes, the character of a palace

and of a castle. A great banqueting-hall, communicating with several large rounds or projecting turret-rooms, and having at either end an immense chimney, testifies the ancient Northern hospitality of the Earls of Orkney, and communicates, almost in the modern fashion, with a gallery or withdrawing-room, of corresponding dimensions, and having, like the hall, its projecting turrets. The lordly hall itself is lighted by a fine Gothic window of shafted stone at one end, and is entered by a spacious and elegant staircase, consisting of three flights of stone steps. The exterior ornaments and proportions of the ancient building are also very handsome; but, being totally unprotected, this remnant of the pomp and grandeur of Earls, who assumed the license as well as the dignity of petty sovereigns, is now fast crumbling to decay, and has suffered considerably since the date of our story.

With folded arms and downcast looks the pirate Cleveland was pacing slowly the ruined hall which we have just described; a place of retirement which he had probably chosen because it was distant from public resort. His dress was considerably altered from that which he usually wore in Zetland, and seemed a sort of uniform, richly laced, and exhibiting no small quantity of embroidery; a hat with a plume, and a small sword very handsomely mounted, then the constant companion of every one who assumed the rank of a gentleman, showed his pretensions to that character. But if his exterior was so far improved, it seemed to be otherwise with his health and spirits. He was pale, and had lost both the fire of his eye and the vivacity of his step, and his whole appearance indicated melancholy of mind, or suffering of body, or combination of both evils.

As Cleveland thus paced these ancient ruins, a young man, of a light and slender form, whose showy dress seemed to have been studied with care, yet exhibited more extravagance than judgment or taste, whose manner was a jaunty affectation of the free and easy rake of the period, and the expression of whose countenance was lively, with a cast of effrontery, tripped up the staircase, entered the hall, and presented himself to Cleveland, who merely nodded to him, and, pulling his hat deeper over his brows, resumed his solitary and discontented promenade.

The stranger adjusted his own hat, nodded in return, took snuff, with the air of a *petit maitre*, from a richly chased gold box, offered it to Cleveland as he passed, and being repulsed rather coldly, replaced the box in his pocket, folded his arms in his turn, and stood looking with fixed attention on his motions whose solitude he had interrupted. At length Cleveland stopped short, as if impatient of being longer the subject of his observation, and said abruptly, "Why can I not be left alone for half an hour, and what the devil is it that you want?"

"I am glad you spoke first," answered the stranger carelessly; "I was determined to know whether you were Clement Cleveland, or Cleveland's ghost, and they say ghosts never take the first word, so I now set it down for yourself in life and limb; and here is a fine old hurly-

house you have found out for an owl to hide himself in at midday, or a ghost to revisit the pale glimpses of the moon, as the divine Shakespeare says."

"Well, well," answered Cleveland abruptly, "your jest is made, and now let us have your earnest."

"In earnest, then, Captain Cleveland," replied his companion, "I think you know me for your friend."

"I am content to suppose so," said Cleveland.

"It is more than supposition," replied the young man; "I have proved it—proved it both here and elsewhere."

"Well, well," answered Cleveland, "I admit you have been always a friendly fellow; and what then?"

"Well, well—and what then?" replied the other; "this is but a brief way of thanking folk. Look you, Captain, here is Benson, Barlowe, Dick Fletcher, and a few others of us who wished you well, have kept your old comrade, Captain Goffe, in these seas upon the look-out for you, when he and Hawkins, and the greater part of the ship's company, would fain have been down on the Spanish Main, and at the old trade."

"And I wish to God that you had all gone about your business," said Cleveland, "and left me to my fate."

"Which would have been to be informed against and hanged, Captain, the first time that any of these Dutch or English rascals, whom you have lightened of their cargoes, came to set their eyes upon you; and no place more likely to meet with seafaring men than in these Islands. And here, to screen you from such a risk, we have been wasting our precious time, till folk are grown very peery; and when we have no more goods or money to spend amongst them, the fellows will be for grabbing the ship."

"Well, then, why do you not sail off without me?" said Cleveland. "There has been fair partition, and all have had their share; let all do as they like. I have lost my ship, and having been once a Captain, I will not go to sea under command of Goffe or any other man. Besides, you know well enough that both Hawkins and he bear me ill-will for keeping them from sinking the Spanish brig, with the poor devils of negroes on board."

"Why, what the foul fiend is the matter with thee?" said his companion. "Are you Clement Cleveland, our own old true-hearted Clem of the Cleugh, and do you talk of being afraid of Hawkins and Goffe, and a score of such fellows, when you have myself and Barlowe and Dick Fletcher at your back? When was it we deserted you, either in council or in fight, that you should be afraid of our flinching now? And as for serving under Goffe, I hope it is no new thing for gentlemen of fortune, who are going on the account, to change a Captain now and then. Let us alone for that,—Captain you shall be; for death rock me asleep if I serve under that fellow Goffe, who is as very a bloodhound as ever sucked bitch! No, no, I thank you; my Captain must have a little

of the gentleman about him, howsoever. Besides, you know, it was you who first dipped my hands in the dirty water, and turned me from a stroller by land to a rover by sea."

"Alas, poor Bunce!" said Cleveland, "you owe me little thanks for that service."

"That is as you take it," replied Bunce; "for my part, I see no harm in levying contributions on the public either one way or t'other. But I wish you would forget that name of Bunce, and call me Altamont, as I have often desired you to do. I hope a gentleman of the roving trade has as good a right to have an alias as a stroller, and I never stepped on the boards but what I was Altamont at the least."

"Well, then, Jack Altamont," replied Cleveland, "since Altamont is the word——"

"Yes, but, Captain, *Jack* is not the word, though Altamont be so. Jack Altamont? Why, 'tis a velvet coat with paper lace. Let it be Frederick, Captain; Frederick Altamont is all of a piece."

"Frederick be it, then, with all my heart," said Cleveland; "and pray tell me, which of your names will sound best at the head of the Last Speech, Confession, and Dying Words of John Bunce, *alias* Frederick Altamont, who was this morning hanged at Execution-dock, for the crime of Piracy upon the High Seas?"

"Faith, I cannot answer that question, without another can of grog, Captain; so if you will go down with me to Bet Haldane's on the quay, I will bestow some thought on the matter, with the help of a right pipe of Trinidado. We will have the gallon bowl filled with the best stuff you ever tasted, and I know some smart wenches who will help us to drain it. But you shake your head, you're not i' the vein? Well, then, I will stay with you; for by this hand, Clem, you shift me not off. Only I will ferret you out of this burrow of old stones, and carry you into sunshine and fair air. Where shall we go?"

"Where you will," said Cleveland, "so that you keep out of the way of our own rascals, and all others."

"Why, then," replied Bunce, "you and I will go up to the Hill of Whitford, which overlooks the town, and walk together as gravely and honestly as a pair of well-employed attorneys."

As they proceeded to leave the ruinous castle, Bunce, turning back to look at it, thus addressed his companion,—

"Hark ye, Captain, dost thou know who last inhabited this old cockloft?"

"An Earl of the Orkneys, they say," replied Cleveland.

"And are you advised what death he died of?" said Bunce; "for I have heard that it was of a tight neck-collar—a hempen fever, or the like."

"The people here do say," replied Cleveland, "that his Lordship, some hundred years ago, had the mishap to become acquainted with the nature of a loop and a leap in the air."

"Why, la ye there now!" said Bunce; "there was some credit in being hanged in those days, and in such worshipful com-

"The stranger . . . took snuff, with the air of a *petit maitre*, from a richly chased gold box" (p. 342.)

pany. And what might his lordship have done to deserve such promotion?"

"Plundered the liege subjects, they say;" replied Cleveland; "slain and wounded them, fired upon his Majesty's flag, and so forth."

"Near akin to a gentleman rover, then," said Bunce, making a theatrical bow towards the old building; "and, therefore, my most potent, grave, and reverend Signior Earl, I crave leave to call you my loving cousin, and bid you most heartily adieu. I leave you in the good company of rats and mice, and so forth, and I carry with me an honest gentleman, who, having of late had no more heart than a mouse, is now desirous to run away from his profession and friends like a rat, and would therefore be a most fitting denizen of your Earlship's palace."

"I would advise you not to speak so loud, my good friend Frederick Altamont, or John Bunce," said Cleveland. "When you were on the stage, you might safely rant as loud as you listed; but in your present profession, of which you are so fond, every man speaks under correction of the yard-arm, and a running noose."

The comrades left the little town of Kirkwall in silence, and ascended the Hill of Whitford, which raises its brow of dark heath, uninterrupted by enclosures or cultivation of any kind, to the northward of the ancient Burgh of Saint Magnus. The plain at the foot of the hill was already occupied by numbers of persons who were engaged in making preparations for the fair of Saint Olla, to be held upon the ensuing day, and which forms a general rendezvous to all the neighbouring islands of Orkney, and is even frequented by many persons from the more distant archipelago of Zetland. It is, in the words of the Proclamation, "a free mercat and fair, holden at the good Burgh of Kirkwall on the third of August, being Saint Olla's day," and continuing for an indefinite space thereafter, extending from three days to a week, and upwards. The fair is of great antiquity, and derives its name from Olaus, Olave, Ollaw, the celebrated Monarch of Norway, who, rather by the edge of his sword than any milder argument, introduced Christianity into those isles, and was respected as the patron of Kirkwall some time before he shared that honour with Saint Magnus the Martyr.

It was no part of Cleveland's purpose to mingle in the busy scene which was here going on; and, turning their route to the left, they soon ascended into undisturbed solitude, save where the grouse, more plentiful in Orkney, perhaps, than in any other part of the British dominions, rose in covey, and went off before them.* Having continued to ascend till they had well-nigh reached the summit of the conical hill, both turned round, as with one consent, to look at and admire the prospect beneath.

The lively bustle, which extended between the foot of the hill and the town, gave life and variety to that part of the scene; then was seen the town itself, out of which arose, like a great mass, superior in

* It is very curious that the grouse, plentiful in Orkney, as the text declares, should be totally unknown in the neighbouring archipelago of Zetland, which is only about sixty miles distance, with the Fair Isle as a step between.

proportion as it seemed to the whole burgh, the ancient Cathedral of Saint Magnus, of the heaviest order of Gothic architecture, but grand, solemn, and stately, the work of a distant age, and of a powerful hand. The quay, with the shipping, lent additional vivacity to the scene; and not only the whole beautiful bay, which lies betwixt the promontories of Inganess and Quanterness, at the bottom of which Kirkwall is situated, but all the sea, so far as visible, and in particular the whole strait betwixt the island of Shapinsha and that called Pomona, or the Mainland, was covered and enlivened by a variety of boats and small vessels, freighted from distant islands to convey passengers or merchandise to the fair of Saint Olla.

Having attained the point by which this fair and busy prospect was most completely commanded, each of the strangers, in seaman fashion, had recourse to his spy-glass, to assist the naked eye in considering the bay of Kirkwall, and the numerous vessels by which it was traversed. But the attention of the two companions seemed to be arrested by different objects. That of Bunce, or Altamont, as he chose to call himself, was riveted to the armed sloop, where, conspicuous by her square rigging and length of beam, with the English Jack and pennon, which they had the precaution to keep flying, she lay among the merchant vessels, as distinguished from them by the trim neatness of her appearance as a trained soldier amongst a crowd of clowns.

"Yonder she lies," said Bunce. "I wish to God she was in the bay of Honduras—you, Captain, on the quarter-deck, I your lieutenant, and Fletcher quartermaster, and fifty stout fellows under us. I should not wish to see these blasted heaths and rocks again for a while! And Captain you shall soon be. The old brute Goffe gets drunk as a lord every day, swaggers and shoots and cuts among the crew; and, besides, he has quarrelled with the people here so damnably, that they will scarce let water or provisions go on board of us, and we expect an open breach every day."

As Bunce received no answer, he turned short round on his companion, and, perceiving his attention otherwise engaged, exclaimed, "What the devil is the matter with you? or what can you see in all that trumpery small craft, which is only loaded with stock-fish, and ling, and smoked geese, and tubs of butter that is worse than tallow? The cargoes of the whole lumped together would not be worth the flash of a pistol. No, no; give me such a chase as we might see from the mast-head off the island of Trinidado. Your Don, rolling as deep in the water as a grampus, deep-loaden with rum, sugar, and bales of tobacco, and all the rest ingots, moidores, and gold dust; then set all sail, clear the deck, stand to quarters, up with the Jolly Roger *—we near her—we make her out to be well manned and armed——"

"Twenty guns on her lower deck," said Cleveland.

* The pirates gave this name to the black flag, which, with many horrible devices to enhance its terrors, was their favourite ensign.

"Forty, if you will," retorted Bunce, "and we have but ten mounted; never mind. The Don blazes away—never mind yet, my brave lads—run her alongside, and on board with you—to work, with your grenadoes, your cutlasses, pole-axes, and pistols. The Don cries Misericordia, and we share the cargo without *co licencio Seignior*!"

"By my faith," said Cleveland, "thou takest so kindly to the trade, that all the world may see that no honest man was spoiled when you were made a pirate. But you shall not prevail on me to go farther in the devil's road with you; for you know yourself that what is got over his back is spent; you wot how. In a week, or a month at most, the rum and sugar are out, the bales of tobacco have become smoke, the moidores, ingots, and gold dust have got out of our hands into those of the quiet, honest, conscientious folks who dwell at Port Royal and elsewhere—wink hard on our trade as long as we have money, but not a jot beyond. Then we have cold looks, and, it may be, a hint is given to the Judge Marshal; for, when our pockets are worth nothing, our honest friends, rather than want, will make money upon our heads. Then comes a high gallows and a short halter, and so dies the Gentleman Rover. I tell thee, I will leave this trade; and, when I turn my glass from one of these barks and boats to another, there is not the worst of them which I would not row for life, rather than continue to be what I have been. These poor men make the sea a means of honest livelihood and friendly communication between shore and shore, for the mutual benefit of the inhabitants; but we have made it a road to the ruin of others, and to our own destruction here and in eternity. I am determined to turn honest man, and use this life no longer!"

"And where will your honesty take up its abode, if it please you?" said Bunce. "You have broken the laws of every nation, and the hand of the law will detect and crush you wherever you may take refuge. Cleveland, I speak to you more seriously than I am wont to do. I have had my reflections, too; and they have been bad enough, though they lasted but a few minutes, to spoil me weeks of joviality. But here is the matter—what can we do but go on as we have done, unless we have a direct purpose of adorning the yardarm?"

"We may claim the benefit of the proclamation to those of our sort who come in and surrender," said Cleveland.

"Umph!" answered his companion drily; "the date of that day of grace has been for some time over, and they may take the penalty or grant the pardon at their pleasure. Were I you, I would not put my neck in such a venture."

"Why, others have been admitted but lately to favour, and why should not I?" said Cleveland.

"Ay," replied his associate; "Harry Glasby and some others have been spared; but Glasby did what was called good service, in betraying his comrades and retaking the *Jolly Fortune*; and that I think you would scorn, even to be revenged of the brute Goffe yonder."

"I would die a thousand times sooner," said Cleveland.

"I will be sworn for it," said Bunce; "and the others were forecastle fellows, petty larceny rogues, scarce worth the hemp it would have cost to hang them. But your name has stood too high amongst the gentlemen of fortune for you to get off so easily. You are the prime buck of the herd, and will be marked accordingly."

"And why so, I pray you?" said Cleveland. "You know well enough my aim, Jack."

"Frederick, if you please," said Bunce.

"The devil take your folly! Prithee keep thy wit, and let us be grave for a moment."

"For a moment—be it so," said Bunce; "but I feel the spirit of Altamont coming fast upon me; I have been a grave man for ten minutes already."

"Be so then for a little longer," said Cleveland. "I know, Jack, that you really love me; and, since we have come thus far in this talk, I will trust you entirely. Now tell me, why should I be refused the benefit of this gracious proclamation? I have borne a rough outside, as thou knowest; but, in time of need, I can show the numbers of lives which I have been the means of saving, the property which I have restored to those who owned it, when, without my intercession, it would have been wantonly destroyed. In short, Bunce, I can show——"

"That you were as gentle a thief as Robin Hood himself," said Bunce; "and, for that reason, I, Fletcher, and the better sort among us, love you, as one who saves the character of us gentlemen rovers from utter reprobation. Well, suppose your pardon made out, what are you to do next? What class in society will receive you? With whom will you associate? Old Drake, in Queen Bess's time, could plunder Peru and Mexico without a line of commission to show for it, and—blessed be her memory!—he was knighted for it on his return. And there was Hal Morgan, the Welshman, nearer our time, in the days of merry King Charles, brought all his gettings home, had his estate and his country-house, and who but he? But that is all ended now; once a pirate, and an outcast for ever. The poor devil may go and live, shunned and despised by every one, in some obscure seaport, with such part of his guilty earnings as courtiers and clerks leave him; for pardons do not pass the seals for nothing; and, when he takes his walk along the pier, if a stranger asks, Who is the down-looking, swarthy, melancholy man, for whom all make way, as if he brought the plague in his person? the answer shall be, That is such a one, the pardoned pirate! No honest man will speak to him, no woman of repute will give him her hand."

"Your picture is too highly coloured, Jack," said Cleveland, suddenly interrupting his friend. "There are women—there is one, at least—that would be true to her lover, even if he were what you have described."

Bunce was silent for a space, and looked fixedly at his friend.

"By my soul!" he said at length, "I begin to think myself a conjurer. Unlikely as it all was, I could not help suspecting from the beginning that there was a girl in the case. Why, this is worse than Prince Volscius in love—ha! ha! ha!"

"Laugh as you will," said Cleveland, "it is true. There is a maiden who is contented to love me, pirate as I am; and I will fairly own to you, Jack, that, though I have often at times detested our roving life, and myself for following it, yet I doubt if I could have found resolution to make the break which I have now resolved on, but for her sake."

"Why, then, God-a-mercy!" replied Bunce, "there is no speaking sense to a madman; and love in one of our trade, Captain, is little better than lunacy. The girl must be a rare creature for a wise man to risk hanging for her. But, harkye, may she not be a little touched, as well as yourself? and is it not sympathy that has done it? She cannot be one of our ordinary cockatrices, but a girl of conduct and character."

"Both are as undoubted as that she is the most beautiful and bewitching creature whom the eye ever opened upon," answered Cleveland.

"And she loves thee, knowing thee, most noble Captain, to be a commander among those gentlemen of fortune, whom the vulgar call pirates?"

"Even so—I am assured of it," said Cleveland.

"Why, then, answered Bunce, "she is either mad in good earnest, as I said before, or she does not know what a pirate is."

"You are right in the last point," replied Cleveland. "She has been bred in such remote simplicity, and utter ignorance of what is evil, that she compares our occupation with that of the Old Norsemen, who swept sea and haven with their victorious galleys, established colonies, conquered countries, and took the name of sea-kings."

"And a better one it is than that of pirate, and comes much to the same purpose, I daresay," said Bunce. "But this must be a mettled wench! Why did you not bring her aboard? Methinks it was pity to baulk her fancy."

"And do you think," said Cleveland, "that I could so utterly play the part of a fallen spirit as to avail myself of her enthusiastic error, and bring an angel of beauty and innocence acquainted with such a hell as exists on board of yonder infernal ship of ours? I tell you, my friend, that, were all my former sins doubled in weight and in dye, such a villainy would have outglared and outweighed them all."

"Why, then, Captain Cleveland," said his confidant, "methinks it was but a fool's part to come hither at all. The news must one day have gone abroad that the celebrated pirate, Captain Cleveland, with his good sloop the *Revenge*, had been lost on the mainland of Zetland, and all hands perished; so you would have remained hid both from friend and enemy, and might have married your pretty Zetlander, and

converted your sash and scarf into fishing-nets, and your cutlass into a harpoon, and swept the seas for fish instead of florins."

"And so I had determined," said the Captain; "but a Jagger, as they call them here, like a meddling, peddling thief as he is, brought down intelligence to Zetland of your lying here, and I was fain to set off, to see if you were the consort of whom I had told them, long before I thought of leaving the roving trade."

"Ay," said Bunce, "and so far you judged well. For, as you had heard of our being at Kirkwall, so we should have soon learned that you were at Zetland; and some of us for friendship, some for hatred, and

"'They carried the wounded man into one of the caverns" (p. 353).

some for fear of your playing Harry Glasby upon us, would have come down for the purpose of getting you into our company again."

"I suspected as much," said the Captain, "and therefore was fain to decline the courteous offer of a friend, who proposed to bring me here about this time. Besides, Jack, I recollected that, as you say, my pardon will not pass the seals without money, my own was waxing low—no wonder, thou knowest I was never a churl of it—and so——"

"And so you came for your share of the cobs?" replied his friend. "It was wisely done, and we shared honourably; so far Goffe has acted up to articles, it must be allowed. But keep your purpose of leaving him close in your breast, for I dread his playing you some dog's trick or other; for he certainly thought himself sure of your share, and will hardly forgive your coming alive to disappoint him."

"I fear him not," said Cleveland, "and he knows that well. I would I were as well clear of the consequences of having been his comrade, as I hold myself to be of all those which may attend his ill-will. Another unhappy job I may be troubled with. I hurt a young fellow, who has been my plague for some time, in an unhappy brawl that chanced the morning I left Zetland."

"Is he dead?" asked Bunce. "It is a more serious question here than it would be on the Grand Caimains or the Bahama Isles, where a brace or two of fellows may be shot in the morning, and no more heard of, or asked about them, than if they were so many wood-pigeons. But here it may be otherwise; so I hope you have not made your friend immortal."

"I hope not," said the Captain, "though my anger has been fatal to those who have given me less provocation. To say the truth, I was sorry for the lad notwithstanding, and especially as I was forced to leave him in mad keeping."

"In mad keeping?" said Bunce; "why, what means that?"

"You shall hear," replied his friend. "In the first place, you are to know, this young man came suddenly on me while I was trying to gain Minna's ear for a private interview before I set sail, that I might explain my purpose to her. Now, to be broken in on by the accursed rudeness of this young fellow at such a moment——"

"The interruption deserved death," said Bunce, "by all the laws of love and honour!"

"A truce with your ends of plays, Jack, and listen one moment. The brisk youth thought proper to retort, when I commanded him to be gone. I am not, thou knowest, very patient, and enforced my commands with a blow, which he returned as roundly. We struggled, till I became desirous that we should part at any rate, which I could only effect by a stroke of my poniard, which, according to old use, I have, thou knowest, always about me. I had scarce done this when I repented; but there was no time to think of anything save escape and concealment, for, if the house rose on me, I was lost; as the fiery old man, who is head of the family, would have done justice on me had I been his brother. I took the body hastily on my shoulders to carry it down to the seashore, with the purpose of throwing it into a *riva*, as they call them, or chasm of great depth, where it would have been long enough in being discovered. This done, I intended to jump into the boat which I had lying ready, and set sail for Kirkwall. But, as I was walking hastily towards the beach with my burden, the poor young fellow groaned, and so apprised me that the wound had not been instantly fatal. I was by this time well concealed amongst the rocks, and, far from desiring to complete my crime, I laid the young man on the ground, and was doing what I could to stanch the blood, when suddenly an old woman stood before me. She was a person whom I had frequently seen while in Zetland, and to whom they ascribe the

character of a sorceress, or, as the negroes say, an Obi woman. She demanded the wounded man of me, and I was too much pressed for time to hesitate in complying with her request. More she was about to say to me, when we heard the voice of a silly old man, belonging to the family, singing at some distance. She then pressed her finger on her lip as a sign of secrecy, whistled very low, and a shapeless, deformed brute of a dwarf coming to her assistance, they carried the wounded man into one of the caverns with which the place abounds, and I got to my boat and to sea with all expedition. If that old hag be, as they say,

Jack Bunce.

connected with the King of the Air, she favoured me that morning with a turn of her calling; for not even the West Indian tornadoes, which we have weathered together, made a wilder racket than the squall that drove me so far out of our course, that, without a pocket-compass, which I chanced to have about me, I should never have recovered the Fair Isle, for which we run, and where I found a brig which brought me to this place. But, whether the old woman meant me weal or woe, here we came at length in safety from the sea, and here I remain in doubts and difficulties of more kinds than one."

"Oh, the devil take the Sumburgh Head," said Bunce, "or whatever they call the rock that you knocked our clever little *Revenge* against!"

"Do not say *I* knocked her on the rock," said Cleveland; "have I not told you fifty times if the cowards had not taken to their boat, though I showed them the danger, and told them they would all be swamped, which happened the instant they cast off the painter, she would have been afloat at this moment? Had they stood by me and the ship, their lives would have been saved; had I gone with them, mine would have been lost; who can say which is for the best?"

"Well," replied his friend, "I know your case now, and can the better help and advise. I will be true to you, Clement, as the blade to the hilt; but I cannot think that you should leave us. As the old Scottish song says, 'Wae's my heart that we should sunder!' But come, you will aboard with us to-day, at any rate?"

"I have no other place of refuge," said Cleveland, with a sigh.

He then once more ran his eyes over the bay, directing his spy-glass upon several of the vessels which traversed its surface, in hopes, doubtless, of discerning the vessel of Magnus Troil, and then followed his companion down the hill in silence.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"I strive like to the vessel in the tide-way,
Which, lacking favouring breeze, hath not the power
To stem the powerful current. Even so,
Resolving daily to forsake my vices,
Habits, strong circumstance, renew'd temptation,
Sweep me to sea again. O heavenly breath,
Fill thou my sails, and aid the feeble vessel,
Which ne'er can reach the blessed port without thee!"
'Tis Odds when Evens meet.

CLEVELAND, with his friend Bunce, descended the hill for a time in silence, until at length the latter renewed their conversation.

"You have taken this fellow's wound more on your conscience than you need, Captain; I have known you do more, and think less on't."

"Not on such slight provocation, Jack," replied Cleveland. "Besides, the lad saved my life; and, say that I requited him the favour, still we should not have met on such evil terms; but I trust that he may receive aid from that woman, who has certainly strange skill in simples."

"And over simpletons, Captain," said his friend, "in which class I must e'en put you down, if you think more on this subject. That you should be made a fool of by a young woman, why, it is many an honest man's case; but to puzzle your pate about the mummeries of an old one is far too great a folly to indulge a friend in. Talk to me of your Minna, since you so call her, as much as you will; but you have no

title to trouble your faithful squire-errant with your old mumping magician. And now here we are once more amongst the booths and tents, which these good folk are pitching; let us look, and see whether we may not find some fun and frolic amongst them. In merry England, now, you would have seen, on such an occasion, two or three bands of strollers, as many fire-eaters and conjurers, as many shows of wild beasts; but, amongst these grave folk, there is nothing but what savours of business and of commodity; no, not so much as a single squall from my merry gossip Punch and his rib Joan."

As Bunce thus spoke, Cleveland cast his eyes on some very gay clothes, which, with other articles, hung out upon one of the booths, that had a good deal more of ornament and exterior decoration than the rest. There was in front a small sign of canvas painted, announcing the variety of goods which the owner of the booth, Bryce Snailsfoot, had on sale, and the reasonable prices at which he proposed to offer them to the public. For the further gratification of the spectator, the sign bore on the opposite side an emblematic device, resembling our first parents in their vegetable garments, with this legend—

"Poor sinners, whom the snake deceives,
Are fain to cover them with leaves.
Zetland hath no leaves, 'tis true,
Because that trees are none, or few;
But we have flax and taits of woo',
For linen cloth and wadmaal blue;
And we have many of foreign knacks,
Of finer waft than woo' or flax.
Ye gallanty Lambmas lads,* appear,
And bring your Lambmas sisters here,
Bryce Snailsfoot spares not cost or care,
To pleasure every gentle pair."

While Cleveland was perusing these goodly rhymes, which brought to his mind Claud Halcro, to whom, as the poet laureate of the island, ready with his talent alike in the service of the great and small, they probably owed their origin, the worthy proprietor of the booth, having cast his eye upon him, began with hasty and trembling hand to remove some of the garments, which, as the sale did not commence till the ensuing day, he had exposed either for the purpose of airing them, or to excite the admiration of the spectators.

"By my word, Captain," whispered Bunce to Cleveland, "you must have had that fellow under your clutches one day, and he remembers one gripe of your talons and fears another. See how fast he is packing his wares out of sight, so soon as he set eyes on you!"

"*His* wares!" said Cleveland, on looking more attentively at his

* It was anciently a custom at Saint Olla's Fair at Kirkwall that the young people of the lower class, and of either sex, associated in pairs for the period of the fair, during which the couple were termed Lambmas brother and sister. It is easy to conceive that the exclusive familiarity arising out of this custom was liable to abuse, the rather that it is said little scandal was attached to the indiscretions which it occasioned.

proceedings; "by Heaven! they are my clothes which I left in a chest at Jarlshof when the *Revenge* was lost there. Why, Bryce Snailsfoot, thou thief, dog, and villain, what means this? Have you not made enough of us by cheap buying and dear selling, that you have seized on my trunk and wearing apparel?"

Bryce Snailsfoot, who probably would otherwise not have been willing to *see* his friend the Captain, was now, by the vivacity of his attack, obliged to pay attention to him. He first whispered to his little foot-page, by whom, as we have already noticed, he was usually attended, "Run to the town-council-house, jarto, and tell the provost and bailies they maun send some of their officers speedily, for here is like to be wild wark in the fair."

So having said, and having seconded his commands by a push on the shoulder of his messenger, which sent him spinning out of the shop as fast as heels could carry him, Bryce Snailsfoot turned to his old acquaintance, and, with that amplification of words and exaggeration of manner which in Scotland is called "making a phrase," he ejaculated, "The Lord be gude to us! the worthy Captain Cleveland, that we were all sae grieved about, returned to relieve our hearts again! Wat have my cheeks been for you" (here Bryce wiped his eyes), "and blithe am I now to see you restored to your sorrowing friends!"

"My sorrowing friends, you rascal!" said Cleveland; "I will give you better cause for sorrow than ever you had on my account, if you do not tell me instantly where you stole all my clothes."

"Stole!" ejaculated Bryce, casting up his eyes; "now the powers be gude to us! the poor gentleman has lost his reason in that weary gale of wind."

"Why, you insolent rascal!" said Cleveland, grasping the cane which he carried, "do you think to bamboozle me with your impudence? As you would have a whole head on your shoulders, and your bones in a whole skin, one minute longer, tell me where the devil you stole my wearing apparel?"

Bryce Snailsfoot ejaculated once more a repetition of the word "Stole! Now, Heaven be gude to us!" but at the same time, conscious that the Captain was likely to be sudden in execution, cast an anxious look to the town, to see the loitering aid of the civil power advance to his rescue.

"I insist on an instant answer," said the Captain, with upraised weapon, "or else I will beat you to a mummy, and throw out all your frippery upon the common!"

Meanwhile, Master John Bunce, who considered the whole affair as an excellent good jest, and not the worse one that it made Cleveland very angry, seized hold of the Captain's arm, and, without any idea of ultimately preventing him from executing his threats, interfered just so much as was necessary to protract a discussion so amusing.

"Nay, let the honest man speak," he said, "messmate; he has as

fine a cozening face as ever stood on a knavish pair of shoulders, and his are the true flourishes of eloquence, in the course of which men snip the cloth an inch too short. Now, I wish you to consider that you are both of a trade,—he measures bales by the yard, and you by the sword, and so I will not have him chopped up till he has had a fair chase."

"You are a fool!" said Cleveland, endeavouring to shake his friend off. "Let me go! for, by Heaven, I will be foul of him!"

"Hold him fast," said the pedlar; "good, dear, merry gentleman, hold him fast!"

"Then say something for yourself," said Bunce; "use your gob-box, man; patter away, or, by my soul, I will let him loose on you!"

"He says I stole these goods," said Bryce, who now saw himself run so close that pleading to the charge became inevitable. "Now, how could I steal them, when they are mine by fair and lawful purchase?"

"Purchase! you beggarly vagrant!" said Cleveland; "from whom did you dare to buy my clothes? or who had the impudence to sell them?"

"Just that worthy professor Mrs. Swertha, the housekeeper at Jarlshof, who acted as your executor," said the pedlar; "and a grieved heart she had."

"And so she was resolved to make a heavy pocket of it, I suppose?" said the Captain. "But how did she dare to sell the things left in her charge?"

"Why, she acted all for the best, good woman!" said the pedlar, anxious to protract the discussion until the arrival of succours; "and, if you will but hear reason, I am ready to account with you for the chest and all that it holds."

"Speak out, then, and let us have none of thy damnable evasions," said Captain Cleveland; "if you show ever so little purpose of being somewhat honest for once in thy life I will not beat thee."

"Why, you see, noble Captain," said the pedlar,—and then muttered to himself, "Plague on Pate Paterson's cripple knee, they will be waiting for him, hirpling useless body!" then resumed aloud—"The country, you see, is in great perplexity, great perplexity indeed,—much perplexity, truly. There was your honour missing, that was loved by great and small—clean missing—nowhere to be heard of—a lost man—umquhile—dead—defunct!"

"You shall find me alive to your cost, you scoundrel!" said the irritated Captain.

"Weel, but take patience; ye will not hear a body speak," said the Jagger. "Then there was the lad, Mordaunt Mertoun——"

"Ha!" said the Captain, "what of him?"

"Cannot be heard of," said the pedlar; "clean and clear tint,—a gone youth; fallen, it is thought, from the craig into the sea. He was aye venturous. I have had dealings with him for furs and feathers, whilk he swapped against powder and shot and the like; and now he

has worn out from among us—clean retired—utterly vanished, like the last puff of an auld wife's tobacco pipe."

"But what is all this to the Captain's clothes, my dear friend?" said Bunce; "I must presently beat you myself unless you come to the point."

"Weel, weel,—patience, patience," said Bryce, waving his hand;

"Cleveland, . . . holding him with one hand, inflicted on him with the other a severe beating with his cane" (p. 361).

"you will get all time enough. Weel, there are two folks gane, as I said, forbye the distress at Burgh-Westra about Mistress Minna's sad ailment—— "

"Bring not *her* into your buffoonery, sirrah," said Cleveland, in a tone of anger, not so loud, but far deeper and more concentrated than he had hitherto used; "for, if you name her with less than reverence, I will crop the ears out of your head, and make you swallow them on the spot!"

"He, he, he!" faintly laughed the Jagger; "that were a pleasant jest! you are pleased to be witty. But, to say naething of Burgh-Westra, there is the carle at Jarlshof, he that was the auld Mertoun, Mordaunt's father, whom men thought as fast bound to the place he dwelt in as the Sumburgh Head itsell; naething maun serve him but he is lost as weel as the lave about whom I have spoken. And there's Magnus Troil (wi' favour be he named) taking horse; and there is pleasant Maister Claud Halcro taking boat, whilk he steers worst of any man in Zetland, his head running on rambling rhymes; and the Factor body is on the stir—the Scots Factor,—him that is aye speaking of dikes and delving, and such unprofitable wark, which has naething of merchandise in it, and he is on the lang trot, too; so that ye might say, upon a manner, the tae half of the mainland of Zetland is lost, and the other is running to and fro seeking it—awfu' times!"

Captain Cleveland had subdued his passion, and listened to this tirade of the worthy man of merchandise, with impatience indeed, yet not without the hope of hearing something that might concern him. But his companion was now become impatient in his turn. "The clothes!" he exclaimed, "the clothes, the clothes, the clothes!" accompanying each repetition of the words with a flourish of his cane, the dexterity of which consisted in coming mighty near the Jagger's ears without actually touching them.

The Jagger, shrinking from each of these demonstrations, continued to exclaim, "Nay, sir—good sir—worthy sir—for the clothes—I found the worthy dame in great distress on account of her old maister, and on account of her young maister, and on account of worthy Captain Cleveland; and because of the distress of the worthy Fowd's family, and the trouble of the great Fowd himself; and because of the Factor, and in respect of Claud Halcro, and on other accounts and respects. Also we mingled our sorrows and our tears with a bottle, as the holy text hath it, and called in the Ranzelman to our council, a worthy man, Niel Ronaldson by name, who hath a good reputation."

Here another flourish of the cane came so very near that it partly touched his ear. The Jagger started back, and the truth, or that which he desired should be considered as such, bolted from him without more circumlocution; as a cork, after much unnecessary buzzing and fizzing, springs forth from a bottle of spruce beer.

"In brief, what the deil mair would you have of it? The woman sold me the kist of clothes; they are mine by purchase, and that is what I will live and die upon."

"In other words," said Cleveland, "this greedy old hag had the impudence to sell what was none of hers; and you, honest Bryce Snailsfoot, had the assurance to be the purchaser?"

"Ou dear, Captain," said the conscientious pedlar, "what wad ye hae had twa poor folk to dó? There was yoursell gane that aught the things, and Maister Mordaunt was gane that had them in keeping, and

the things were but damply put up, where they were rotting with moth and mould, and——"

"And so this old thief sold them, and you bought them, I suppose, just to keep them from spoiling?" said Cleveland.

"Weel then," said the merchant, "I'm thinking, noble Captain, that wad be just the gate of it."

"Well then, hark ye, you impudent scoundrel," said the Captain, "I do not wish to dirty my fingers with you, or to make any disturbance in this place——"

"Good reason for that, Captain—aha!" said the Jagger slyly.

"I will break your bones if you speak another word," replied Cleveland. "Take notice—I offer you fair terms—give me back the black leathern pocket-book with the lock upon it, and the purse with the doubloons, with some few of the clothes I want, and keep the rest in the devil's name!"

"Doubloons!" exclaimed the Jagger, with an exaltation of voice intended to indicate the utmost extremity of surprise, "what do I ken of doubloons? My dealing was for doublets, and not for doubloons. If there were doubloons in the kist, doubtless Swertha will have them in safe keeping for your honour; the damp wouldna harm the gold, ye ken."

"Give me back my pocket-book and my goods, you rascally thief," said Cleveland, "or without a word more I will beat your brains out!"

The wily Jagger, casting eye around him, saw that succour was near, in the shape of a party of officers, six in number; for several *rencontres* with the crew of the pirate had taught the magistrates of Kirkwall to strengthen their police parties when these strangers were in question.

"Ye had better keep the *thief* to suit yoursell, honoured Captain," said the Jagger, emboldened by the approach of the civil power; "for wha kens how a' these fine goods and bonny-dies were come by?"

This was uttered with such provoking slyness of look and tone, that Cleveland made no further delay, but, seizing upon the Jagger by the collar, dragged him over his temporary counter, which was, with all the goods displayed thereon, overset in the scuffle; and, holding him with one hand, inflicted on him with the other a severe beating with his cane. All this was done so suddenly and with such energy, that Bryce Snailsfoot, though rather a stout man, was totally surprised by the vivacity of the attack, and made scarce any other effort at extricating himself than by roaring for assistance like a bull-calf. The "loitering aid" having at length come up, the officers made an effort to seize on Cleveland, and by their united exertions succeeded in compelling him to quit hold of the pedlar, in order to defend himself from their assault. This he did with infinite strength, resolution, and dexterity, being at the same time well seconded by his friend, Jack Bunce, who had seen with glee the

drubbing sustained by the pedlar, and now combated tightly to save his companion from the consequences. But, as there had been for some time a growing feud between the townspeople and the crew of the Rover, the former, provoked by the insolent deportment of the seamen, had resolved to stand by each other, and to aid the civil power upon such occasions of riot as should occur in future; and so many assistants came up to the rescue of the constables, that Cleveland, after fighting most manfully, was at length brought to the ground and made prisoner. His more fortunate companion had escaped by speed of foot, as soon as he saw that the day must needs be determined against them.

The proud heart of Cleveland, which, even in its perversion, had in its feelings something of original nobleness, was like to burst, when he felt himself borne down in this unworthy brawl—dragged into the town as a prisoner, and hurried through the streets towards the Council-house, where the magistrates of the burgh were then seated in council. The probability of imprisonment, with all its consequences, rushed also upon his mind, and he cursed a hundred times the folly which had not rather submitted to the pedlar's knavery than involved him in so perilous an embarrassment.

But just as they approached the door of the Council-house, which is situated in the middle of the little town, the face of matters was suddenly changed by a new and unexpected incident.

Bunce, who had designed, by his precipitate retreat, to serve as well his friend as himself, had hied him to the haven, where the boat of the Rover was then lying, and called the cockswain and boat's crew to the assistance of Cleveland. They now appeared on the scene, fierce desperadoes, as became their calling, with features bronzed by the tropical sun under which they had pursued it. They rushed at once amongst the crowd, laying about them with their stretchers; and, forcing their way up to Cleveland, speedily delivered him from the hands of the officers, who were totally unprepared to resist an attack so furious and so sudden, and carried him off in triumph towards the quay, two or three of their number facing about from time to time to keep back the crowd, whose efforts to recover the prisoner were the less violent that most of the seamen were armed with pistols and cutlasses, as well as with the less lethal weapons which alone they had as yet made use of.

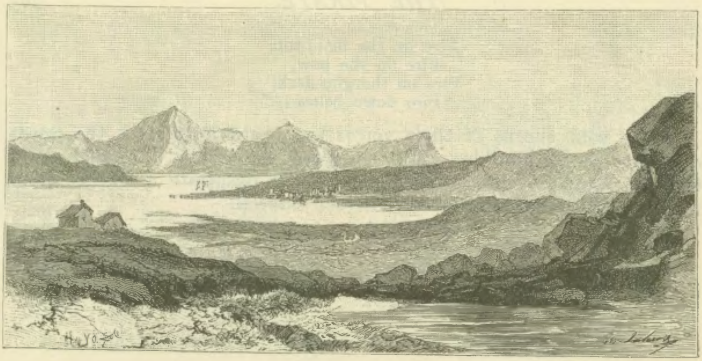
They gained their boat in safety, and jumped into it, carrying along with them Cleveland, to whom circumstances seemed to offer no other refuge, and pushed off for their vessel, singing in chorus to their oars an old ditty, of which the natives of Kirkwall could only hear the first stanza:—

"Robin Rover
Said to his crew,
'Up with the black flag,
Down with the blue!

"They . . . speedily delivered him from the hands of the officers . . . and carried him off in triumph towards the quay" (p. 362).

Fire on the main-top,
Fire on the bow,
Fire on the gun-deck,
Fire down below!'"

The wild chorus of their voices was heard long after the words ceased to be intelligible. And thus was the pirate Cleveland again thrown almost involuntarily amongst those desperate associates from whom he had so often resolved to detach himself.



CHAPTER XXXIII.

"Parental love, my friend, has power o'er wisdom,
And is the charm, which, like the falconer's lure,
Can bring from heaven the highest soaring spirits.
So, when famed Prosper doff'd his magic robe,
It was Miranda pluck'd it from his shoulders."

Old Play.

OUR wandering narrative must now return to Mordaunt Mertoun. We left him in the perilous condition of one who has received a severe wound, and we now find him in the condition of a convalescent, pale, indeed, and feeble from the loss of much blood, and the effects of a fever which had followed the injury, but so far fortunate that the weapon, having glanced on the ribs, had only occasioned a great effusion of blood, without touching any vital part, and was now well-nigh healed; so efficacious were the vulnerary plants and salves with which it had been treated by the sage Norna of Fitful Head.

The matron and her patient now sat together in a dwelling in a remote island. He had been transported, during his illness, and ere he had perfect consciousness, first to her singular habitation near Fitful Head, and thence to her present abode, by one of the fishing-boats on the station of Burgh-Westra. For such was the command possessed by Norna over the superstitious character of her countrymen, that she never failed to find faithful agents to execute her commands, whatever these happened to be; and, as her orders were generally given under injunctions of the strictest secrecy, men reciprocally wondered at

occurrences which had, in fact, been produced by their own agency and that of their neighbours, and in which, had they communicated freely with each other, no shadow of the marvellous would have remained.

Mordaunt was now seated by the fire, in an apartment indifferently well furnished, having a book in his hand, which he looked upon from time to time with signs of *ennui* and impatience; feelings which at length so far overcame him, that, flinging the volume on the table, he fixed his eyes on the fire, and assumed the attitude of one who is engaged in unpleasant meditation.

Norna, who sat opposite to him, and appeared busy in the composition of some drug or unguent, anxiously left her seat, and, approaching Mordaunt, felt his pulse, making at the same time the most affectionate inquiries whether he felt any sudden pain, and where it was seated. The manner in which Mordaunt replied to these earnest inquiries, although worded so as to express gratitude for her kindness, while he disclaimed any feeling of indisposition, did not seem to give satisfaction to the Pythoness.

"Ungrateful boy!" she said, "for whom I have done so much; you whom I have rescued, by my power and skill, from the very gates of death, are you already so weary of me, that you cannot refrain from showing how desirous you are to spend, at a distance from me, the very first intelligent days of the life which I have restored you?"

"You do me injustice, my kind preserver," replied Mordaunt; "I am not tired of your society; but I have duties which recall me to ordinary life."

"Duties!" repeated Norna; "and what duties can or ought to interfere with the gratitude which you owe to me? Duties! Your thoughts are on the use of your gun, or on clambering among the rocks in quest of sea-fowl. For these exercises your strength doth not yet fit you; and yet these are the duties to which you are so anxious to return!"

"Not so, my good and kind mistress," said Mordaunt. "To name one duty, out of many, which makes me seek to leave you, now that my strength permits, let me mention that of a son to his father."

"To your father!" said Norna, with a laugh that had something in it almost frantic. "Oh! you know not how we can, in these islands, at once cancel such duties! And, for your father," she added, proceeding more calmly, "what has he done for you, to deserve the regard and duty you speak of? Is he not the same who, as you have long since told me, left you for so many years poorly nourished among strangers, without inquiring whether you were alive or dead, and only sending, from time to time, supplies in such fashion as men relieve the leprous wretch to whom they fling alms from a distance? And, in these later years, when he had made you the companion of his misery, he has been by starts your pedagogue, by starts your tormentor, but never, Mordaunt, never your father."

"Something of truth there is in what you say," replied Mordaunt. "My father is not fond, but he is, and has ever been, effectively kind. Men have not their affections in their power; and it is a child's duty to be grateful for the benefits which he receives, even when coldly bestowed. My father has conferred instruction on me, and I am convinced he loves me. He is unfortunate; and, even if he loved me not——"

"And he does *not* love you," said Norna hastily; "he never loved anything, or any one, save himself. He is unfortunate, but well are his misfortunes deserved. Oh, Mordaunt, you have one parent only; one parent, who loves you as the drops of the heart-blood!"

"I know I have but one parent," replied Mordaunt; "my mother has been long dead. But your words contradict each other."

"They do not—they do not," said Norna, in a paroxysm of the deepest feeling; "you have but one parent. Your unhappy mother is not dead—I would to God that she were! but she is not dead. Thy mother is the only parent that loves thee; and I—I, Mordaunt," throwing herself on his neck, "am that most unhappy—yet most happy mother!"

She closed him in a strict and convulsive embrace; and tears, the first, perhaps, which she had shed for many years, burst in torrents as she sobbed on his neck. Astonished at what he heard, felt, and saw,—moved by the excess of her agitation, yet disposed to ascribe this burst of passion to insanity, Mordaunt vainly endeavoured to tranquillise the mind of this extraordinary person.

"Ungrateful boy!" she said, "who but a mother would have watched over thee as I have watched? From the instant I saw thy father, when he little thought by whom he was observed, a space now many years back, I knew him well; and, under his charge, I saw you, then a stripling, while Nature, speaking loud in my bosom, assured me thou wert blood of my blood, and bone of my bone. Think how often you have wondered to see me, when least expected, in your places of pastime and resort! Think how often my eye has watched you on the giddy precipices, and muttered those charms which subdue the evil demons, who show themselves to the climber on the giddiest point of his path, and force him to quit his hold! Did I not hang around thy neck, in pledge of thy safety, that chain of gold, which an Elfin King gave to the founder of our race? Would I have given that dear gift to any but to the son of my bosom? Mordaunt, my power has done that for thee that a mere mortal mother would dread to think of. I have conjured the Mermaid at midnight, that thy bark might be prosperous on the Haaf! I have hushed the winds, and navies have flapped their empty sails against the mast in inactivity that you might safely indulge your sport upon the crags!"

Mordaunt, perceiving that she was growing yet wilder in her talk, endeavoured to frame an answer which should be at once indulgent,

soothing, and calculated to allay the rising warmth of her imagination.

"Dear Norna," he said, "I have indeed many reasons to call you mother, who have bestowed so many benefits upon me; and from me you shall ever receive the affection and duty of a child. But the chain you mentioned—it has vanished from my neck; I have not seen it since the ruffian stabbed me."

"Alas! and can you think of it at this moment?" said Norna,

"She closed him in a strict and convulsive embrace" (p. 368).

in a sorrowful accent. "But be it so; and know, it was I took it from thy neck, and tied it around the neck of her who is dearest to you; in token that the union betwixt you, which has been the only earthly wish which I have had the power to form, shall yet, even yet, be accomplished, ay, although hell should open to forbid the banns!"

"Alas!" said Mordaunt, with a sigh, "you remember not the

difference betwixt our situation; her father is wealthy, and of ancient birth."

"Not more wealthy than will be the heir of Norna of Fitful Head," answered the Pythoness; "not of better or more ancient blood than that which flows in thy veins, derived from thy mother, the descendant of the same Jarls and Sea-Kings from whom Magnus boasts his origin. Or dost thou think, like the pedant and fanatic strangers who have come amongst us, that thy blood is dishonoured because my union with thy father did not receive the sanction of a priest? Know that we were wedded after the ancient manner of the Norse; our hands were clasped within the circle of Odin,* with such deep vows of eternal fidelity as even the laws of these usurping Scots would have sanctioned as equivalent to a blessing before the altar. To the offspring of such a union Magnus has nought to object. It was weak, it was criminal, on my part, but it conveyed no infamy to the birth of my son."

The composed and collected manner in which Norna argued these points began to impose upon Mordaunt an incipient belief in the truth of what she said; and, indeed, she added so many circumstances, satisfactorily and rationally connected with each other, as seemed to confute the notion that her story was altogether the delusion of that insanity which sometimes showed itself in her speech and actions. A thousand confused ideas rushed upon him, when he supposed it possible that the unhappy person before him might actually have a right to claim from him the respect and affection due to a parent from a son. He could only surmount them by turning his mind to a different, and scarce less interesting topic, resolving within himself to take time for farther inquiry and mature consideration, ere he either rejected or admitted the claim which Norna preferred upon his affection and duty. His benefactress, at least, she undoubtedly was, and he could not err in paying her, as such, the respect and attention due from a son to a mother; and so far, therefore, he might gratify Norna without otherwise standing committed.

"And do you then really think, my mother, since so you bid me term you," said Mordaunt, "that the proud Magnus Troil may, by any inducement, be prevailed upon to relinquish the angry feelings which he has of late adopted towards me, and to permit my addresses to his daughter Brenda?"

"Brenda?" repeated Norna, "who talks of Brenda? It was of Minna that I spoke to you."

"But it was of Brenda that I thought," replied Mordaunt, "of her that I now think, and of her alone that I will ever think."

"Impossible, my son!" replied Norna. "You cannot be so dull of heart, so poor of spirit, as to prefer the idle mirth and housewife simplicity of the younger sister to the deep feeling and high mind of

* See an explanation of this promise, Note XII.

the noble-spirited Minna? Who would stoop to gather the lowly violet, that might have the rose for stretching out his hand?"

"Some think the lowliest flowers are the sweetest," replied Mordaunt, "and in that faith will I live and die."

"You dare not tell me so!" answered Norna fiercely; then, instantly changing her tone, and taking his hand in the most affectionate manner, she proceeded, "You must not, you will not tell me so, my dear son; you will not break a mother's heart in the very first hour in which she has embraced her child! Nay, do not answer, but hear me. You must wed Minna; I have bound around her neck a fatal amulet, on which the happiness of both depends. The labours of my life have for years had this direction. Thus it must be, and not otherwise; Minna must be the bride of my son!"

"But is not Brenda equally near, equally dear to you?" replied Mordaunt.

"As near in blood," said Norna, "but not so dear, no, not half so dear, in affection. Minna's mild, yet high and contemplative spirit, renders her a companion meet for one whose ways, like mine, are beyond the ordinary paths of this world. Brenda is a thing of common and ordinary life, an idle laugher and scoffer, who would level art with ignorance, and reduce power to weakness by disbelieving and turning into ridicule whatever is beyond the grasp of her own shallow intellect."

"She is, indeed," answered Mordaunt, "neither superstitious nor enthusiastic, and I love her the better for it. Remember also, my mother, that she returns my affection, and that Minna, if she loves any one, loves the stranger Cleveland."

"She does not; she dares not," answered Norna, "nor dares he pursue her farther. I told him, when first he came to Burgh-Westra, that I destined her for you."

"And to that rash annunciation," said Mordaunt, "I owe this man's persevering enmity, my wound, and well-nigh the loss of my life. See, my mother, to what point your intrigues have already conducted us, and, in Heaven's name, prosecute them no farther!"

It seemed as if this reproach struck Norna with the force, at once, and vivacity of lightning; for she struck her forehead with her hand, and seemed about to drop from her seat. Mordaunt, greatly shocked, hastened to catch her in his arms, and, though scarce knowing what to say, attempted to utter some incoherent expressions.

"Spare me, Heaven, spare me!" were the first words which she muttered; "do not let my crime be avenged by his means! Yes, young man," she said, after a pause, "you have dared to tell what I dared not tell myself. You have pressed that upon me which, if it be truth, I cannot believe, and yet continue to live!"

Mordaunt in vain endeavoured to interrupt her with protestations of his ignorance how he had offended or grieved her, and of his extreme

regret that he had unintentionally done either. She proceeded, while her voice trembled wildly, with vehemence,—

"Yes! you have touched on that dark suspicion which poisons the consciousness of my power, the sole boon which was given me in exchange for innocence and for peace of mind! Your voice joins that of the demon which, even while the elements confess me their mistress, whispers to me, 'Norna, this is but delusion; your power rests but in the idle belief of the ignorant, supported by a thousand petty artifices of your own.' This is what Brenda says, this is what you would say; and false, scandalously false, as it is, there are rebellious thoughts in this wild brain of mine" (touching her forehead with her finger as she spoke), "that, like an insurrection in an invaded country, arise to take part against their distressed sovereign. Spare me, my son!" she continued, in a voice of supplication, "spare me! The sovereignty of which your words would deprive me is no enviable exaltation. Few would covet to rule over gibbering ghosts and howling winds and raging currents. My throne is a cloud, my sceptre a meteor, my realm is only peopled with fantasies; but I must either cease to be, or continue to be the mightiest as well as the most miserable of beings!"*

"Do not speak thus mournfully, my dear and unhappy benefactress," said Mordaunt, much affected; "I will think of your power whatever you would have me believe. But, for your own sake, view the matter otherwise. Turn your thoughts from such agitating and mystical studies —from such wild subjects of contemplation, into another and better channel. Life will again have charms, and religion will have comforts for you."

She listened to him with some composure, as if she weighed his counsel, and desired to be guided by it; but, as he ended, she shook her head and exclaimed,—

"It cannot be! I must remain the dreaded, the mystical, the Reimkennar, the controller of the elements, or I must be no more! I have no alternative, no middle station. My post must be high on yon lofty headland, where never stood human foot save mine, or I must sleep at the bottom of the unfathomable ocean, its white billows booming over my senseless corpse. The parricide shall never also be denounced as the impostor!"

"The parricide!" echoed Mordaunt, stepping back in horror.

"Yes, my son!" answered Norna, with a stern composure, even more frightful than her former impetuosity; "within these fatal walls my father met his death by my means. In yonder chamber was he found a livid and lifeless corpse. Beware of filial disobedience, for such are its fruits!"

So saying, she arose and left the apartment, where Mordaunt remained alone to meditate at leisure upon the extraordinary communication which he had received. He himself had been taught by his

* Note XV. Character of Norna.

father a disbelief in the ordinary superstitions of Zetland; and he now saw that Norna, however ingenious in duping others, could not altogether impose on herself. This was a strong circumstance in favour of her sanity of intellect; but, on the other hand, her imputing to herself the guilt of parricide seemed so wild and improbable as, in Mordaunt's opinion, to throw much doubt upon her other assertions.

He had leisure enough to make up his mind on these particulars, for no one approached the solitary dwelling, of which Norna, her dwarf, and he himself were the sole inhabitants. The Hoy island in which it stood is rude, bold, and lofty, consisting entirely of three hills, or rather

"It seemed as if this reproach struck Norna with the force, at once, and vivacity of lightning" (p. 371).

one huge mountain divided into three summits, with the chasms, rents, and valleys which descend from its summit to the sea, while its crest, rising to great height, and shivered into rocks which seem almost inaccessible, intercepts the mists as they drive from the Atlantic, and, often obscured from the human eye, forms the dark and unmolested retreat of hawks, eagles, and other birds of prey.*

The soil of the island is wet, mossy, cold, and unproductive, presenting a sterile and desolate appearance, excepting where the sides of small rivulets or mountain ravines are fringed with dwarf bushes of birch, hazel, and wild currant, some of them so tall as to be denominated trees in that bleak and bare country.

* Note XVI. Birds of prey.

But the view of the sea-beach, which was Mordaunt's favourite walk, when his convalescent state began to permit him to take exercise, had charms which compensated the wild appearance of the interior. A broad and beautiful sound, or strait, divides this lonely and mountainous island from Pomona, and in the centre of that sound lies, like a tablet composed of emerald, the beautiful and verdant little island of Græmsay. On the distant mainland is seen the town or village of Stromness, the excellence of whose haven is generally evinced by a considerable number of shipping in the roadstead, and, from the bay growing narrower, and lessening as it recedes, runs inland into Pomona, where its tide fills the fine sheet of water called the Loch of Stennis.

On this beach Mordaunt was wont to wander for hours, with an eye not insensible to the beauties of the view, though his thoughts were agitated with the most embarrassing meditations on his own situation. He was resolved to leave the island as soon as the establishment of his health should permit him to travel; yet gratitude to Norna, of whom he was at least the adopted, if not the real son, would not allow him to depart without her permission, even if he could obtain means of conveyance, of which he saw little possibility. It was only by importunity that he extorted from his hostess a promise that, if he would consent to regulate his motions according to her directions, she would herself convey him to the capital of the Orkney islands when the approaching fair of Saint Olla should take place there.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"Hark to the insult loud, the bitter sneer,
The fierce threat answering to the brutal jeer;
Oaths fly like pistol-shots, and vengeful words
Clash with each other like conflicting swords—
The robber's quarrel by such sounds is shown,
And true men have some chance to gain their own."

Captivity, a Poem.

WHEN Cleveland, borne off in triumph from his assailants in Kirkwall, found himself once more on board the pirate-vessel, his arrival was hailed with hearty cheers by a considerable part of the crew, who rushed to shake hands with him, and offer their congratulations on his return; for the situation of a Buccaneer Captain raised him very little above the level of the lowest of his crew, who, in all social intercourse, claimed the privilege of being his equal.

When his faction, for so these clamorous friends might be termed, had expressed their own greetings they hurried Cleveland forward to the stern, where Goffe, their present commander, was seated on a gun, listening in a sullen and discontented mood to the shout which announced Cleveland's welcome. He was a man betwixt forty and fifty, rather under the middle size, but so very strongly made that his crew used to compare him to a sixty-four cut down. Black-haired, bull-necked, and beetle-browed, his clumsy strength and ferocious countenance contrasted strongly with the manly figure and open countenance of Cleveland, in which even the practice of his atrocious profession had not been able to eradicate a natural grace of motion and generosity of expression. The

two piratical Captains looked upon each other for some time in silence, while the partisans of each gathered around him. The elder part of the crew were the principal adherents of Goffe, while the young fellows, among whom Jack Bunce was a principal leader and agitator, were in general attached to Cleveland.

At length Goffe broke silence. "You are welcome aboard, Captain Cleveland. Smash my taffrail! I suppose you think yourself commodore yet! but that was over, by G—, when you lost your ship, and be d—d!"

And here, once for all, we may take notice that it was the gracious custom of this commander to mix his words and oaths in nearly equal proportions, which he was wont to call *shotting* his discourse. As we delight not, however, in the discharge of such artillery, we shall only indicate by a space like this —— the places in which these expletives occurred; and thus, if the reader will pardon a very poor pun, we will reduce Captain Goffe's volley of sharp-shot into an explosion of blank cartridges. To his insinuations that he was come on board to assume the chief command, Cleveland replied that he neither desired, nor would accept, any such promotion, but would only ask Captain Goffe for a cast of the boat to put him ashore in one of the other islands, as he had no wish either to command Goffe, or to remain in a vessel under his orders.

"And why not under my orders, brother?" demanded Goffe, very austerely. "— — — Are you too good a man — — — with your cheese-toaster and your jib there, — — to serve under my orders, and be d—d to you, where there are so many gentlemen that are elder and better seamen than yourself?"

"I wonder which of these capital seamen it was," said Cleveland coolly, "that laid the ship under the fire of yon six-gun battery, that could blow her out of the water, if they had a mind, before you could either cut or slip? Elder and better sailors than I may like to serve under such a lubber, but I beg to be excused for my own share, Captain; that's all I have got to tell you."

"By G—, I think you are both mad!" said Hawkins the boatswain; "a meeting with sword and pistol may be devilish good fun in its way, when no better is to be had; but who the devil that had common sense, amongst a set of gentlemen in our condition, would fall a-quarrelling with each other, to let these duck-winged, web-footed islanders have a chance of knocking us all upon the head?"

"Well said, old Hawkins!" observed Derrick the quartermaster, who was an officer of very considerable importance among these rovers; "I say, if the two captains won't agree to live together quietly, and club both heart and head to defend the vessel, why, d—n me, depose them both, say I, and choose another in their stead!"

"Meaning yourself, I suppose, Master Quartermaster!" said Jack Bunce; "but that cock won't fight. He that is to command gentlemen should be a gentleman himself, I think; and I give my vote for Captain

Cleveland, as spirited and as gentlemanlike a man as ever daffed the world aside, and bid it pass!"

"What! *you* call yourself a gentleman, I warrant!" retorted Derrick; "why, —— your eyes! a tailor would make a better out of the worst suit of rags in your strolling wardrobe! It is a shame for men of spirit to have such a Jack-a-dandy scarecrow on board!"

Jack Bunce was so incensed at these base comparisons, that, without more ado, he laid his hand on his sword. The carpenter, however, and boatswain interfered, the former brandishing his broad axe, and swearing he would put the skull of the first who would strike a blow past clouting, and the latter reminding them that, by their articles, all quarrelling, striking, or more especially fighting, on board, was strictly prohibited; and that, if any gentleman had a quarrel to settle, they were to go ashore, and decide it with cutlass and pistol in presence of two of their messmates.

"I have no quarrel with any one, — — —!" said Goffe sullenly. "Captain Cleveland has wandered about among the islands here, amusing himself, — — —! and we have wasted our time and property in waiting for him, when we might have been adding twenty or thirty thousand dollars to the stock-purse. However, if it pleases the rest of the gentlemen-adventurers, — — —! why, I shall not grumble about it."

"I propose," said the boatswain, "that there should be a general council called in the great cabin, according to our articles, that we may consider what course we are to hold in this matter."

A general assent followed the boatswain's proposal; for every one found his own account in these general councils, in which each of the rovers had a free vote. By far the greater part of the crew only valued this franchise as it allowed them, upon such solemn occasions, an unlimited quantity of liquor—a right which they failed not to exercise to the uttermost, by way of aiding their deliberations. But a few amongst the adventurers, who united some degree of judgment with the daring and profligate character of their profession, were wont, at such periods, to limit themselves within the bounds of comparative sobriety, and by these, under the apparent form of a vote of the general council, all things of moment relating to the voyage and undertakings of the pirates were in fact determined. The rest of the crew, when they recovered from their intoxication, were easily persuaded that the resolution adopted had been the legitimate effort of the combined wisdom of the whole senate.

Upon the present occasion the debauch had proceeded until the greater part of the crew were, as usual, displaying inebriation in all its most brutal and disgraceful shapes—swearing empty and unmeaning oaths, venting the most horrid imprecations in the mere gaiety of their heart, singing songs, the ribaldry of which was only equalled by their profaneness; and, from the middle of this earthly hell, the two captains, together with one or two of their principal adherents, as also the

carpenter and boatswain, who always took a lead on such occasions, had drawn together into a pandemonium, or privy council of their own, to consider what was to be done; for, as the boatswain metaphorically observed, they were in a narrow channel, and behoved to keep sounding the tide-way.

When they began their consultations, the friends of Goffe remarked, to their great displeasure, that he had not observed the wholesome rule to which we have just alluded; but that, in endeavouring to drown his mortification at the sudden appearance of Cleveland, and the reception he met with from the crew, the elder Captain had not been able to do so without overflowing his reason at the same time. His natural sullen taciturnity had prevented this from being observed until the council began its deliberations, when it proved impossible to hide it.

The first person who spoke was Cleveland, who said, that, so far from wishing the command of the vessel, he desired no favour at any one's hand, except to land him upon some island or holm at a distance from Kirkwall, and leave him to shift for himself.

The boatswain remonstrated strongly against this resolution. "The lads," he said, "all knew Cleveland, and could trust his seamanship as well as his courage; besides, he never let the grog get quite uppermost, and was always in proper trim, either to sail the ship or to fight the ship, whereby she was never without some one to keep her course when he was on board. And as for the noble Captain Goffe," continued the mediator, "he is as stout a heart as ever broke biscuit, and that I will uphold him; but then, when he has his grog aboard—I speak to his face—he is so d—d funny with his cranks and his jests, that there is no living with him. You all remember how nigh he had run the ship on that cursed Horse of Copinsha, as they call it, just by way of frolic; and then you know how he fired off his pistol under the table, when we were at the great council, and shot Jack Jenkins in the knee, and cost the poor devil his leg, with his pleasantry." *

"Jack Jenkins was not a chip the worse," said the carpenter; "I took the leg off with my saw as well as any loblolly-boy in the land could have done; heated my broad axe, and seared the stump; ay, by ——! and made a jury-leg that he shambles about with as well as ever he did; for Jack could never cut a feather." †

"You are a clever fellow, carpenter," replied the boatswain, "a d—d clever fellow! but I had rather you tried your saw and red-hot axe upon the ship's knee-timbers than on mine, sink me! But that here is not the case. The question is, if we shall part with Captain Cleveland here, who is a man of thought and action, whereby it is my belief it

* This was really an exploit of the celebrated Avery the pirate, who suddenly, and without provocation, fired his pistols under the table where he sat drinking with his messmates, wounded one man severely, and thought the matter a good jest. What is still more extraordinary, his crew regarded it in the same light.

† A ship going fast through the sea is said to cut a feather, alluding to the ripple which she throws off from her bows.

would be heaving the pilot overboard when the gale is blowing on a lee-shore. And, I must say, it is not the part of a true heart to leave his mates, who have been here waiting for him till they have missed stays. Our water is well-nigh out, and we have junketed till provisions are low with us. We cannot sail without provisions; we cannot get provisions without the good-will of the Kirkwall folks. If we remain here longer, the *Halcyon* frigate will be down upon us—she was seen off Peterhead two days since—and we shall hang up at the yardarm to

"Jack Bunce was so incensed at these base comparisons, that, without more ado, he laid his hand on his sword" (p. 377).

be sun-dried. Now, Captain Cleveland will get us out of the hobble, if any can. He can play the gentleman with these Kirkwall folks, and knows how to deal with them on fair terms, and foul, too, if there be occasion for it."

"And so you would turn honest Captain Goffe a-grazing, would ye?" said an old weather-beaten pirate, who had but one eye; "what though he has his humours, and made my eye dowse the glim in his fancies and frolics, he is as honest a man as ever walked a quarter-deck, for all that; and d—n me but I stand by him so long as t'other lantern is lit!"

"Why, you would not hear me out," said Hawkins; "a man might as well talk to so many negers! I tell you, I propose that Cleveland shall only be Captain from one, *post meridiem*, to five *a.m.*, during which time Goffe is always drunk."

The Captain of whom he last spoke gave sufficient proof of the truth of his words by uttering an inarticulate growl, and attempting to present a pistol at the mediator Hawkins.

"Why, look ye now!" said Derrick, "there is all the sense he has, to get drunk on council-day, like one of these poor silly fellows!"

"Ay," said Bunce, "drunk as Davy's sow, in the face of the field, the fray, and the senate!"

"But, nevertheless," continued Derrick, "it will never do to have two captains in the same day. I think week about might suit better, and let Cleveland take the first turn."

"There are as good here as any of them," said Hawkins; "howsomdever, I object nothing to Captain Cleveland, and I think he may help us into deep water as well as another."

"Ay," exclaimed Bunce, "and a better figure he will make at bringing these Kirkwallers to order than his sober predecessor! So Captain Cleveland for ever!"

"Stop, gentlemen," said Cleveland, who had hitherto been silent; "I hope you will not choose me Captain without my own consent?"

"Ay, by the blue vault of heaven will we," said Bunce, "if it be *pro bono publico!*"

"But hear me, at least," said Cleveland; "I do consent to take command of the vessel, since you wish it, and because I see you will ill get out of the scrape without me."

"Why, then, I say, Cleveland for ever, again!" shouted Bunce.

"Be quiet, prithee, dear Bunce! honest Altamont!" said Cleveland. "I undertake the business on this condition—that, when I have got the ship cleared for her voyage, with provisions and so forth, you will be content to restore Captain Goffe to the command, as I said before, and put me ashore somewhere, to shift for myself. You will then be sure it is impossible I can betray you, since I will remain with you till the last moment."

"Ay, and after the last moment, too, by the blue vault! or I mistake the matter," muttered Bunce to himself.

The matter was now put to the vote, and so confident were the crew in Cleveland's superior address and management, that the temporary disposition of Goffe found little resistance even among his own partisans, who reasonably enough observed, "He might at least have kept sober to look after his own business. E'en let him put it to rights again himself next morning, if he will."

But when the next morning came, the drunken part of the crew, being informed of the issue of the deliberations of the council, to which they were virtually held to have assented, showed such a superior sense

of Cleveland's merits, that Goffe, sulky and malcontent as he was, judged it wisest for the present to suppress his feelings of resentment, until a safer opportunity for suffering them to explode, and to submit to the degradation which so frequently took place among a piratical crew.

Cleveland, on his part, resolved to take upon him, with spirit and without loss of time, the task of extricating his ship's company from their perilous situation. For this purpose, he ordered the boat, with the purpose of going ashore in person, carrying with him twelve of the stoutest and best men of the crew, all very handsomely appointed (for the success of their nefarious profession had enabled the pirates to assume nearly as gay dresses as their officers), and above all, each man being sufficiently armed with cutlass and pistols, and several having pole-axes and poniards.

Cleveland himself was gallantly attired in a blue coat, lined with crimson silk, and laced with gold very richly, crimson damask waistcoat and breeches, a velvet cap, richly embroidered, with a white feather, white silk stockings, and red-heeled shoes, which were the extremity of finery among the gallants of the day. He had a gold chain several times folded round his neck, which sustained a whistle of the same metal, the ensign of his authority. Above all, he wore a decoration peculiar to those daring depredators, who, besides one, or perhaps two brace of pistols at their belt, had usually two additional brace, of the finest mounting and workmanship, suspended over their shoulders in a sort of sling or scarf of crimson ribbon. The hilt and mounting of the Captain's sword corresponded in value to the rest of his appointments, and his natural good mien was so well adapted to the whole equipment, that, when he appeared on deck, he was received with a general shout by the crew, who, as in other popular societies, judged a great deal by the eye.

Cleveland took with him in the boat, amongst others, his predecessor in office, Goffe, who was also very richly dressed, but who, not having the advantage of such an exterior as Cleveland's, looked like a boorish clown in the dress of a courtier, or rather like a vulgar-faced footpad decked in the spoils of some one whom he has murdered, and whose claim to the property of his garments is rendered doubtful in the eyes of all who look upon him, by the mixture of awkwardness, remorse, cruelty, and insolence which clouds his countenance. Cleveland probably chose to take Goffe ashore with him, to prevent his having any opportunity, during his absence, to debauch the crew from their allegiance. In this guise they left the ship, and, singing to their oars, while the water foamed higher at the chorus, soon reached the quay of Kirkwall.

The command of the vessel was in the meantime intrusted to Bunce, upon whose allegiance Cleveland knew that he might perfectly depend, and, in a private conversation with him of some length, he gave him directions how to act in such emergencies as might occur.

These arrangements being made, and Bunce having been repeatedly charged to stand upon his guard alike against the adherents of Goffe and any attempt from the shore, the boat put off. As she approached the harbour, Cleveland displayed a white flag, and could observe that their appearance seemed to occasion a good deal of bustle and alarm. People were seen running to and fro, and some of them appeared to be getting under arms. The battery was manned hastily, and the English colours displayed. These were alarming symptoms, the rather that Cleveland knew that, though there were no artillerymen in Kirkwall, yet there were many sailors perfectly competent to the management of great guns, and willing enough to undertake such service in case of need.

Noting these hostile preparations with a heedful eye, but suffering nothing like doubt or anxiety to appear on his countenance, Cleveland ran the boat right for the quay, on which several people, armed with muskets, rifles, and fowling-pieces, and others with half-pikes and whaling-knives, were now assembled, as if to oppose his landing. Apparently, however, they had not positively determined what measures they were to pursue; for, when the boat reached the quay, those immediately opposite bore back, and suffered Cleveland and his party to leap ashore without hindrance. They immediately drew up on the quay, except two, who, as their Captain had commanded, remained in the boat, which they put off to a little distance; a manœuvre which, while it placed the boat (the only one belonging to the sloop) out of danger of being seized, indicated a sort of careless confidence in Cleveland and his party, which was calculated to intimidate their opponents.

The Kirkwallers, however, showed the old Northern blood, put a manly face upon the matter, and stood upon the quay, with their arms shouldered, directly opposite to the rovers, and blocking up against them the street which leads to the town.

Cleveland was the first who spoke, as the parties stood thus looking upon each other. "How is this, gentlemen burghers?" he said; "are you Orkney folks turned Highlandmen, that you are all under arms so early this morning; or have you manned the quay to give me the honour of a salute upon taking the command of my ship?"

The burghers looked on each other, and one of them replied to Cleveland, "We do not know who you are; it was that other man," pointing to Goffe, "who used to come ashore as Captain."

"That other gentleman is my mate, and commands in my absence," said Cleveland; "but what is that to the purpose? I wish to speak with your Lord Mayor, or whatever you call him."

"The Provost is sitting in counsel with the magistrates," answered the spokesman.

"So much the better," replied Cleveland. "Where do their worships meet?"

"In the Council-house," answered the other.

"Then make way for us, gentlemen, if you please, for my people and I are going there."

There was a whisper among the townspeople; but several were unresolved upon engaging in a desperate, and perhaps an unnecessary conflict with desperate men; and the more determined citizens formed the hasty reflection that the strangers might be more easily mastered in the house, or perhaps in the narrow streets which they had to traverse, than when they stood drawn up and prepared for battle upon the quay. They suffered them, therefore, to proceed unmolested; and Cleveland, moving very slowly, keeping his people close together, suffering no one to press upon the flanks of his little detachment, and making four men, who constituted his rear guard, turn round and face to the rear from time to time, rendered it, by his caution, a very dangerous task to make any attempt upon them.

"'The very fellow that stopped my servant wench on the street, as she carried the lantern home before me'" (p. 384).

In this manner they ascended the narrow street, and reached the Council-house, where the magistrates were actually sitting, as the citizen had informed Cleveland. Here the inhabitants began to press forward, with the purpose of mingling with the pirates, and availing themselves of the crowd in the narrow entrance to secure as many as they could, without allowing them room for the free use of their weapons. But this,

also, had Cleveland foreseen, and, ere entering the council-room, he caused the entrance to be cleared and secured, commanding four of his men to face down the street, and as many to confront the crowd who were thrusting each other from above. The burghers recoiled back from the ferocious, swarthy, and sunburnt countenances, as well as the levelled arms of these desperadoes, and Cleveland, with the rest of his party, entered the council-room, where the magistrates were sitting in council, with very little attendance. These gentlemen were thus separated effectually from the citizens, who looked to them for orders, and were perhaps more completely at the mercy of Cleveland than he, with his little handful of men, could be said to be at that of the multitude by whom they were surrounded.

The magistrates seemed sensible of their danger, for they looked upon each other in some confusion, when Cleveland thus addressed them,—

"Good-morrow, gentlemen; I hope there is no unkindness betwixt us. I am come to talk with you about getting supplies for my ship yonder in the roadstead; we cannot sail without them."

"Your ship, sir?" said the Provost, who was a man of sense and spirit; "how do we know that you are her Captain?"

"Look at me," said Cleveland, "and you will, I think, scarce ask the question again."

The magistrate looked at him, and accordingly did not think proper to pursue that part of the inquiry, but proceeded to say, "And if you are her Captain, whence comes she, and where is she bound for? You look too much like a man-of-war's man to be master of a trader, and we know that you do not belong to the British navy."

"There are more men-of-war on the sea than sail under the British flag," replied Cleveland. "But say that I were commander of a free-trader here, willing to exchange tobacco, brandy, gin, and suchlike for cured fish and hides, why, I do not think I deserve so very bad usage from the merchants of Kirkwall as to deny me provisions for my money?"

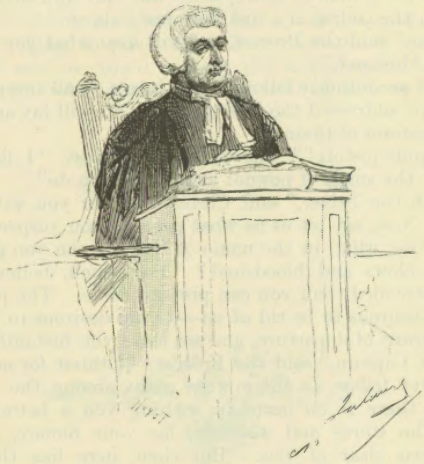
"Look you, Captain," said the Town-clerk, "it is not that we are so very strait-laced neither; for, when gentlemen of your cloth come this way, it is as weel, as I tauld the Provost, just to do as the collier did when he met the devil,—and that is, to have naething to say to them, if they have naething to say to us; and there is the gentleman," pointing to Goffe, "that was Captain before you, and may be Captain after you" ("The cuckold speaks truth in that," muttered Goffe); "he knows well how handsomely we entertained him, till he and his men took upon them to run through the town like hellicat devils. I see one of them there!—that was the very fellow that stopped my servant-wench on the street, as she carried the lantern home before me, and insulted her before my face!"

"If it please your noble Mayorship's honour and glory," said

Derrick, the fellow at whom the Town-clerk pointed, "it was not I that brought-to the bit of a tender that carried the lantern in the poop, it was quite a different sort of a person."

"Who was it, then, sir?" said the Provost.

"Why, please your majesty's worship," said Derrick, making several sea bows, and describing, as nearly as he could, the exterior of the worthy magistrate himself, "he was an elderly gentleman, Dutch-built, round in the stern, with a white wig and a red nose—very like your majesty, I think;" then, turning to a comrade, he added, "Jack, don't you think the fellow that wanted to kiss the pretty girl with the lantern t'other night was very like his worship?"



The Mayor of Kirkwall.

"By G—, Tom Derrick," answered the party appealed to, "I believe it is the very man!"

"This is insolence which we can make you repent of, gentlemen!" said the magistrate, justly irritated at their effrontery; "you have behaved in this town as if you were in an Indian village at Madagascar. You yourself, Captain, if captain you be, were at the head of another riot, no longer since than yesterday. We will give you no provisions till we know better whom we are supplying. And do not think to bully us; when I shake this handkerchief out at the window, which is at my elbow, your ship goes to the bottom. Remember she lies under the guns of our battery."

"And how many of these guns are honeycombed, Mr. Mayor?" said

Cleveland. He put the question by chance; but instantly perceived, from a sort of confusion which the Provost in vain endeavoured to hide, that the artillery of Kirkwall was not in the best order. "Come, come, Mr. Mayor," he said, "bullying will go down with us as little as with you. Your guns yonder will do more harm to the poor old sailors who are to work them than to our sloop; and if we bring a broadside to bear on the town, why, your wives' crockery will be in some danger. And then to talk to us of seamen being a little frolicsome ashore, why, when are they otherwise? You have the Greenland whalers playing the devil among you every now and then; and the very Dutchmen cut capers in the streets of Kirkwall, like porpoises before a gale of wind. I am told you are a man of sense, and I am sure you and I could settle this matter in the course of a five minutes' palaver."

"Well, sir," said the Provost, "I will hear what you have to say, if you will walk this way."

Cleveland accordingly followed him into a small interior apartment, and when there, addressed the Provost thus: "I will lay aside my pistols, sir, if you are afraid of them."

"D—n your pistols!" answered the Provost, "I have served the king, and fear the smell of powder as little as you do!"

"So much the better," said Cleveland, "for you will hear me the more coolly. Now, sir, let us be what perhaps you suspect us, or let us be anything else, what, in the name of Heaven, can you get by keeping us here, but blows and bloodshed? For which, believe me, we are much better provided than you can pretend to be. The point is a plain one: you are desirous to be rid of us—we are desirous to be gone. Let us have the means of departure, and we leave you instantly."

"Look ye, Captain," said the Provost, "I thirst for no man's blood. You are a pretty fellow, as there were many among the buccaneers in my time, but there is no harm in wishing you a better trade. You should have the stores and welcome, for your money, so you would make these seas clear of you. But then, here lies the rub. The *Halcyon* frigate is expected here in these parts immediately; when she hears of you she will be at you; for there is nothing the white lapelle loves better than a rover; you are seldom without a cargo of dollars. Well, he comes down, gets you under his stern——"

"Blows us into the air, if you please," said Cleveland.

"Nay, that must be as *you* please, Captain," said the Provost; "but then, what is to come of the good town of Kirkwall, that has been packing and peeling with the king's enemies? The burgh will be laid under a round fine, and it may be that the Provost may not come off so easily."

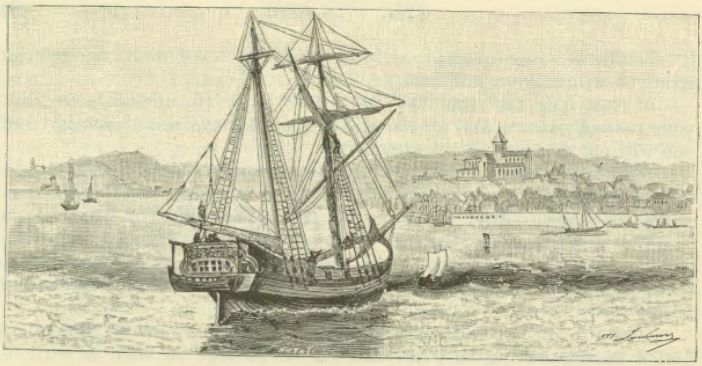
"Well, then," said Cleveland, "I see where your pinch lies. Now, suppose that I run round this island of yours, and get into the roadstead at Stromness? We could get what we want put on board there, without Kirkwall or the Provost seeming to have any hand in it; or, if

it should be ever questioned, your want of force and our superior strength will make a sufficient apology."

"That may be," said the Provost; "but if I suffer you to leave your present station and go elsewhere, I must have some security that you will not do harm to the country."

"And we," said Cleveland, "must have some security on our side, that you will not detain us by dribbling out our time till the *Halcyon* is on the coast. Now, I am myself perfectly willing to continue on shore as a hostage, on the one side, provided you will give me your word not to betray me, and send some magistrate, or person of consequence, aboard the sloop, where his safety will be a guarantee for mine."

The Provost shook his head, and intimated it would be difficult to find a person willing to place himself as hostage in such a perilous condition; but said he would propose the arrangement to such of the council as were fit to be trusted with a matter of such weight.



CHAPTER XXXV.

"I left my poor plough to go ploughing the deep!"

DIBDIN.

WHEN the Provost and Cleveland had returned into the public council-room, the former retired a second time with such of his brethren as he thought proper to advise with; and, while they were engaged in discussing Cleveland's proposal, refreshments were offered to him and his party. These the Captain permitted his people to partake of, but with the greatest precaution against surprisal, one party relieving the guard, whilst the others were at their food.

He himself, in the meanwhile, walked up and down the apartment, and conversed upon indifferent subjects with those present, like a person quite at his ease.

Amongst these individuals he saw, somewhat to his surprise, Triptolemus Yellowley, who, chancing to be at Kirkwall, had been summoned by the magistrates as representative, in a certain degree, of the Lord Chamberlain, to attend council on this occasion. Cleveland immediately renewed the acquaintance which he had formed with the agriculturist at Burgh-Westra, and asked him his present business in Orkney.

"Just to look after some of my little plans, Captain Cleveland. I am weary of fighting with wild beasts at Ephesus yonder, and I just cam ower to see how my orchard was thriving, whilk I had planted four or five miles from Kirkwall, it may be a year bygane, and how

the bees were thriving, whereof I had imported nine skeps, for the improvement of the country, and for the turning of the heather-bloom into wax and honey."

"And they thrive, I hope?" said Cleveland, who, however little interested in the matter, sustained the conversation, as if to break the chilly and embarrassed silence which hung upon the company assembled.

"Thrive!" replied Triptolemus; "they thrive like everything else in this country, and that is the backward way."

"Want of care, I suppose?" said Cleveland.

"The contrary, sir, quite and clean the contrary," replied the Factor; "they died of ower muckle care, like Lucky Christie's chickens. I asked to see the skeps, and cunning and joyful did the fallow look who was to have taken care of them. 'Had there been onybody in charge but mysell,' he said, 'ye might have seen the skeps, or whatever you ca' them; but there wad hae been as mony solan-geese as flees in them, if it hadna been for my four quarters; for I watched them so closely that I saw them a' creeping out at the little holes one sunny morning, and if I had not stopped the leak on the instant with a bit clay, the deil a bee, or flee, or whatever they are, would have been left in the skeps, as ye ca' them!' In a word, sir, he had clagged up the hives, as if the puir things had had the pestilence, and my bees were as dead as if they had been smeaked; and so ends my hope, *generandi gloria mellis*, as Virgilius hath it."

"There is an end of your mead, then," replied Cleveland; "but what is your chance of cider? How does the orchard thrive?"

"Oh, Captain! this same Solomon of the Orcadian Ophir—I am sure no man need to send thither to fetch either talents of gold or talents of sense!—I say, this wise man had watered the young apple-trees, in his great tenderness, with hot water, and they are perished, root and branch! But what avails grieving? And I wish you would tell me, instead, what is all the din that these good folks are making about pirates? And what for all these ill-looking men, that are armed like so mony Highlandmen, assembled in the judgment-chamber? for I am just come from the other side of the island, and I have heard nothing distinct about it. And, now I look at you yoursell, Captain, I think you have mair of these foolish pistolets about you than should suffice an honest man in quiet times?"

"And so I think, too," said the pacific Triton, old Haagen, who had been an unwilling follower of the daring Montrose; "if you had been in the Glen of Edderachyllis, when we were sae sair worried by Sir John Worry—— "

"You have forgot the whole matter, Neighbour Haagen," said the Factor; "Sir John Urry was on your side, and was ta'en with Montrose; by the same token he lost his head."

"Did he?" said the Triton. "I believe you may be right; for he changed sides mair than anes, and wha kens whilk he died for? But

always he was there, and so was I. A fight there was, and I never wish to see another!"

The entrance of the Provost here interrupted their desultory conversation. "We have determined," he said, "Captain, that your ship shall go round to Stromness, or Scalpa-flow, to take in stores, in order that there may be no more quarrels between the fair folks and your seamen. And as you wish to stay on shore to see the fair, we intend to send a respectable gentleman on board your vessel to pilot her round the mainland, as the navigation is but ticklish."

"Spoken like a quiet and sensible magistrate, Mr. Mayor," said Cleveland, "and no otherwise than as I expected. And what gentleman is to honour our quarter-deck during my absence?"

"We have fixed that, too, Captain Cleveland," said the Provost; "you may be sure we were each more desirous than another to go upon so pleasant a voyage, and in such good company; but being fair time, most of us have some affairs in hand. I myself, in respect of my office, cannot be well spared, the eldest Bailie's wife is lying-in, the Treasurer does not agree with the sea, two Bailies have the gout, the other two are absent from town, and the other fifteen members of council are all engaged on particular business."

"All that I can tell you, Mr. Mayor," said Cleveland, raising his voice, "is, that I expect ——"

"A moment's patience, if you please, Captain," said the Provost, interrupting him. "So that we have come to the resolution that our worthy Mr. Triptolemus Yellowley, who is Factor to the Lord Chamberlain of these islands, shall, in respect of his official situation, be preferred to the honour and pleasure of accompanying you."

"Me!" said the astonished Triptolemus, "what the devil should I do going on your voyages? My business is on dry land!"

"The gentlemen want a pilot," said the Provost, whispering to him, "and there is no eviting to give them one."

"Do they want to go bump on shore, then?" said the Factor. "How the devil should I pilot them, that never touched rudder in my life?"

"Hush! hush! be silent!" said the Provost; "if the people of this town heard ye say such a word, your utility, and respect, and rank, and everything else, is clean gone! No man is anything with us island folks unless he can hand, reef, and steer. Besides, it is but a mere form; and we will send old Pate Sinclair to help you. You will have nothing to do but to eat, drink, and be merry all day."

"Eat and drink!" said the Factor, not able to comprehend exactly why this piece of duty was pressed upon him so hastily, and yet not very capable of resisting or extricating himself from the toils of the more knowing Provost; "eat and drink? That is all very well; but, to speak truth, the sea does not agree with me any more than with the Treasurer; and I have always a better appetite for eating and drinking ashore."

"Hush! hush! hush!" again said the Provost, in an undertone of earnest expostulation; "would you actually ruin your character out and out? A Factor of the High Chamberlain of the isles of Orkney and Zetland, and not like the sea! You might as well say you are a Highlander and do not like whisky!"

"You must settle it somehow, gentlemen," said Captain Cleveland; "it is time we were under weigh. Mr. Triptolemus Yellowley, are we to be honoured with your company?"

"'Hush! hush! hush!' again said the Provost, in an undertone of earnest expostulation."

"I am sure, Captain Cleveland," stammered the Factor, "I would have no objection to go anywhere with you—only ——"

"He has no objection," said the Provost, catching at the first limb of the sentence, without awaiting the conclusion.

"He has no objection!" cried the Treasurer.

"He has no objection!" sung out the whole four Bailies together; and the fifteen Councillors, all catching up the same phrase of assent, repeated it in chorus, with the additions of "Good man," "Public-spirited," "Honourable gentleman," "Burgh eternally obliged," "Where will you find such a worthy Factor?" and so forth.

Astonished and confused at the praises with which he was overwhelmed on all sides, and in no shape understanding the nature of the transaction that was going forward, the astounded and overwhelmed agriculturist became incapable of resisting the part of the Kirkwall Curtius thus insidiously forced upon him, and was delivered up by Captain Cleveland to his party, with the strictest injunctions to treat him with honour and attention. Goffe and his companions began now to lead him off amid the applauses of the whole meeting, after the manner in which the victim of ancient days was garlanded and greeted by shouts when consigned to the priests for the purpose of being led to the altar and knocked on the head, a sacrifice for the commonweal. It was while they thus conducted, and in a manner forced him out of the Council-chamber, that poor Triptolemus, much alarmed at finding that Cleveland, in whom he had some confidence, was to remain behind the party, tried, when just going out at the door, the effect of one remonstrating bellow. "Nay, but, Provost! Captain! Bailies! Treasurer! Councillors! if Captain Cleveland does not go aboard to protect me, it is nae bargain, and go I will not, unless I am trailed with cart-ropes!"

His protest was, however, drowned in the unanimous chorus of the magistrates and councillors, returning him thanks for his public spirit, wishing him a good voyage, and praying to Heaven for his happy and speedy return. Stunned and overwhelmed, and thinking, if he had any distinct thoughts at all, that remonstrance was vain, where friends and strangers seemed alike determined to carry the point against him, Triptolemus, without farther resistance, suffered himself to be conducted into the street, where the pirate's boat's-crew, assembling around him, began to move slowly towards the quay, many of the townsfolk following out of curiosity, but without any attempt at interference or annoyance; for the pacific compromise which the dexterity of the first magistrate had achieved, was unanimously approved of as a much better settlement of the disputes betwixt them and the strangers than might have been attained by the dubious issue of an appeal to arms.

Meanwhile, as they went slowly along, Triptolemus had time to study the appearance, countenance, and dress of those into whose hands he had been thus delivered, and began to imagine that he read in their looks, not only the general expression of a desperate character, but some sinister intentions directed particularly towards himself. He was alarmed by the truculent looks of Goffe, in particular, who, holding his arm with a gripe which resembled in delicacy of touch the compression of a smith's vice, cast on him, from the outer corner of his eye,

oblique glances, like those which the eagle throws upon the prey which she has clutched, ere yet she proceeds, as it is technically called, to plume it. At length Yellowley's fears got so far the better of his prudence, that he fairly asked his terrible conductor, in a sort of crying whisper, "Are you going to murder me, Captain, in the face of the laws baith of God and man?"

"Hold your peace, if you are wise," said Goffe, who had his own reasons for desiring to increase the panic of his captive; "we have not murdered a man these three months, and why should you put us in mind of it?"

"You are but joking, I hope, good worthy Captain," replied Triptolemus. "This is worse than witches, dwarfs, dirking of whales, and cowping of cobles put all together! This is an away-ganging crop, with a vengeance! What good, in Heaven's name, would murdering me do to you?"

"We might have some pleasure in it, at least," said Goffe. "Look these fellows in the face, and see if you see one among them that would not rather kill a man than let it alone? But we will speak more of that when you have first had a taste of the bilboes, unless, indeed, you come down with a handsome round handful of Chili boards* for your ransom."

"As I shall live by bread, Captain," answered the Factor, "that misbegotten dwarf has carried off the whole hornful of silver!"

"A cat-and-nine-tails will make you find it again," said Goffe gruffly; "flogging and pickling is an excellent receipt to bring a man's wealth into his mind; twisting a bowstring round his skull till the eyes start a little is a very good remembrancer too."

"Captain," replied Yellowley stoutly, "I have no money—seldom can improvers have. We turn pasture to tillage, and barley into aits, and heather into greensward, and the poor *yarpha*, as the benighted creatures here call their peat-bogs, into baittle grass-land; but we seldom make anything of it that comes back to our ain pouch. The carles and the cart-avers make it all, and the carles and the cart-avers eat it all, and the deil clink doun with it!"

"Well, well," said Goffe, "if you be really a poor fellow, as you pretend, I'll stand your friend." Then inclining his head so as to reach the ear of the Factor, who stood on tiptoe with anxiety, he said, "If you love your life, do not enter the boat with us."

"But how am I to get away from you, while you hold me so fast by the arm, that I could not get off if the whole year's crop of Scotland depended on it?"

"Hark ye, you gudgeon," said Goffe; "just when you come to the water's edge, and when the fellows are jumping in and taking their oars, slue yourself round suddenly to the larboard—I will let go your arm—and then cut and run for your life!"

* Commonly called by landsmen, Spanish dollars.

Triptolemus did as he was desired, Goffe's willing hand relaxed the grasp as he had promised, the agriculturist trundled off like a football that has just received a strong impulse from the foot of one of the players, and, with celerity which surprised himself as well as all beholders, fled through the town of Kirkwall. Nay, such was the impetus of his retreat, that, as if the grasp of the pirate was still open to pounce upon him, he never stopped till he had traversed the whole town, and attained the open country on the other side. They who had seen him that day—his hat and wig lost in the sudden effort he had made to bolt forward, his cravat awry, and his waistcoat unbuttoned, and who had an opportunity of comparing his round spherical form and short legs with the portentous speed at which he scoured through the street, might well say that, if Fury ministers arms, Fear confers wings. His very mode of running seemed to be that peculiar to his fleecy care, for, like a ram in the midst of his race, he ever and anon encouraged himself by a great bouncing attempt at a leap, though there were no obstacles in his way.

There was no pursuit after the agriculturist; and though a musket or two were presented for the purpose of sending a leaden messenger after him, yet Goffe, turning peacemaker for once in his life, so exaggerated the dangers that would attend a breach of the truce with the people of Kirkwall, that he prevailed upon the boat's crew to forbear any active hostilities, and to pull off for their vessel with all dispatch.

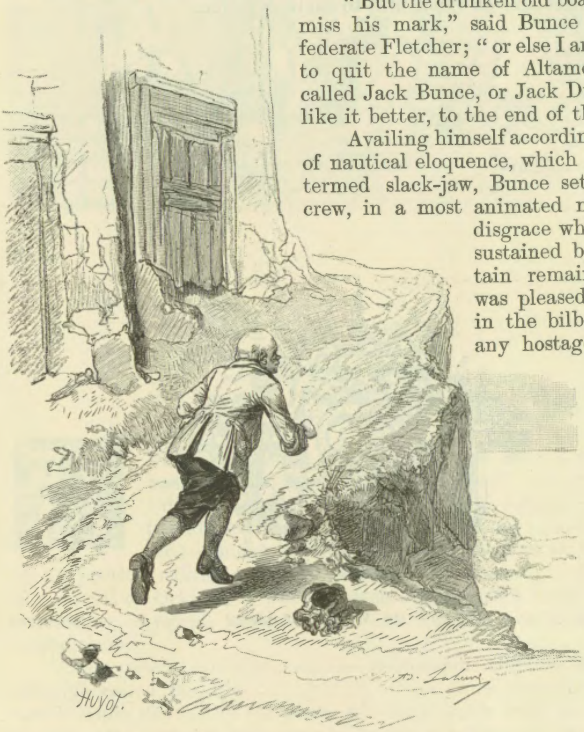
The burghers, who regarded the escape of Triptolemus as a triumph on their side, gave the boat three cheers, by way of an insulting farewell; while the magistrates, on the other hand, entertained great anxiety respecting the probable consequences of this breach of articles between them and the pirates; and, could they have seized upon the fugitive very privately, instead of complimenting him with a civic feast in honour of the agility which he displayed, it is likely they might have delivered the runaway hostage once more into the hands of his foemen. But it was impossible to set their face publicly to such an act of violence, and therefore they contented themselves with closely watching Cleveland, whom they determined to make responsible for any aggression which might be attempted by the pirates. Cleveland, on his part, easily conjectured that the motive which Goffe had for suffering the hostage to escape was to leave him answerable for all consequences, and, relying more on the attachment and intelligence of his friend and adherent, Frederick Altamont, alias Jack Bunce, than on anything else, expected the result with considerable anxiety, since the magistrates, though they continued to treat him with civility, plainly intimated they would regulate his treatment by the behaviour of the crew, though he no longer commanded them.

It was not, however, without some reason that he reckoned on the devoted fidelity of Bunce; for no sooner did that trusty adherent

receive from Goffe and the boat's crew the news of the escape of Triptolemus, than he immediately concluded it had been favoured by the late Captain, in order that, Cleveland being either put to death or consigned to hopeless imprisonment, Goffe might be called upon to resume the command of the vessel.

"But the drunken old boatswain shall miss his mark," said Bunce to his confederate Fletcher; "or else I am contented to quit the name of Altamont, and be called Jack Bunce, or Jack Dunce, if you like it better, to the end of the chapter."

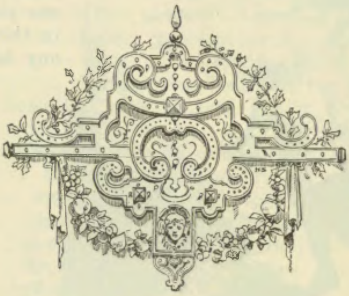
Availing himself accordingly of a sort of nautical eloquence, which his enemies termed slack-jaw, Bunce set before the crew, in a most animated manner, the disgrace which they all sustained by their Captain remaining, as he was pleased to term it, in the bilboes, without any hostage to answer for his safety; and succeeded so far, that, besides exciting a good deal of discontent against Goffe, he brought the crew to the resolution of seizing the first vessel of a tolerable appearance, and declaring that the ship, crew, and cargo should be dealt with according to the usage which Cleveland should receive on shore. It was judged at the same time proper to try the faith of the Orcadians, by removing from the roadstead of Kirkwall, and going round to that of Stromness, where, according to the treaty betwixt Provost Torfe and Captain Cleveland, they were to victual their sloop. They resolved, in the meantime, to intrust the command of the vessel to a council, consisting



"The agriculturist trundled off like a football" (p. 394).

of Goffe, the boatswain, and Bunce himself, until Cleveland should be in a situation to resume his command.

These resolutions having been proposed and acceded to, they weighed anchor, and got their sloop under sail, without experiencing any opposition or annoyance from the battery, which relieved them of one important apprehension incidental to their situation.



CHAPTER XXXVI.

"Clap on more sail, pursue, up with your fights,
Give fire—she is my prize, or ocean whelm them all!"

SHAKESPEARE.

A VERY handsome brig, which, with several other vessels, was the property of Magnus Troil, the great Zetland Udaller, had received on board that magnate himself, his two lovely daughters, and the facetious Claud Halcro, who, for friendship's sake chiefly, and the love of beauty proper to his poetical calling, attended them on their journey from Zetland to the capital of Orkney, to which Norna had referred them as the place where her mystical oracles should at length receive a satisfactory explanation.

They passed, at a distance, the tremendous cliffs of the lonely spot of earth called the Fair Isle, which, at an equal distance from either archipelago, lies in the sea which divides Orkney from Zetland; and at length, after some baffling winds, made the Start of Sanda. Off the headland so named they became involved in a strong current, well known by those who frequent these seas as the Roost of the Start, which carried them considerably out of their course, and, joined to an adverse wind, forced them to keep on the east side of the island of Stronsa, and finally compelled them to lie by for the night in Papa Sound, since the navigation in dark or thick weather, amongst so many low islands, is neither pleasant nor safe.

On the ensuing morning they resumed their voyage under more

favourable auspices; and, coasting along the island of Stronsa, whose flat, verdant, and comparatively fertile shores formed a strong contrast to the dun hills and dark cliffs of their own islands, they doubled the cape called the Lamb-head, and stood away for Kirkwall.

They had scarce opened the beautiful bay betwixt Pomona and Shapinsha, and the sisters were admiring the massive church of Saint Magnus, as it was first seen to rise from amongst the inferior buildings of Kirkwall, when the eyes of Magnus and of Claud Halcro were attracted by an object which they thought more interesting. This was an armed sloop, with her sails set, which had just left the anchorage in the bay, and was running before the wind by which the brig of the Udaller was beating in.

"A tight thing that, by my ancestors' bones!" said the old Udaller; "but I cannot make out of what country, as she shows no colours. Spanish built, I should think her."

"Ay, ay," said Claud Halcro, "she has all the look of it. She runs before the wind that we must battle with, which is the wonted way of the world. As glorious John says—

> 'With roomy deck, and guns of mighty strength,
> Whose low-laid mouths each mounting billow laves,
> Deep in her draught, and warlike in her length,
> She seems a sea-wasp flying on the waves.'"

Brenda could not help telling Halcro, when he had spouted this stanza with great enthusiasm, "that though the description was more like a first-rate than a sloop, yet the simile of the sea-wasp served but indifferently for either."

"A sea-wasp?" said Magnus, looking with some surprise as the sloop, shifting her course, suddenly bore down on them. "Egad, I wish she may not show us presently that she has a sting!"

What the Udaller said in jest was fulfilled in earnest; for, without hoisting colours or hailing, two shots were discharged from the sloop, one of which ran dipping and dancing upon the water just ahead of the Zetlander's bows, while the other went through his main-sail.

Magnus caught up a speaking-trumpet, and hailed the sloop to demand what she was, and what was the meaning of this unprovoked aggression. He was only answered by the stern command—"Down top-sails instantly, and lay your main-sail to the mast; you shall see who we are presently."

There were no means within the reach of possibility by which obedience could be evaded, where it would instantly have been enforced by a broadside; and, with much fear on the part of the sisters and Claud Halcro, mixed with anger and astonishment on that of the Udaller, the brig lay-to to await the commands of the captors.

The sloop immediately lowered a boat, with six armed hands, commanded by Jack Bunce, which rowed directly for their prize. As they approached her, Claud Halcro whispered to the Udaller, "If what

we hear of buccaneers be true, these men, with their silk scarfs and vests, have the very cut of them."

"My daughters! my daughters!" muttered Magnus to himself, with such an agony as only a father could feel, "go down below, and hide yourselves, girls, while I——"

He threw down his speaking-trumpet, and seized on a handspike, while his daughters, more afraid of the consequences of his fiery temper to himself than of anything else, hung round him, and begged him to make no resistance. Claud Halcro united his entreaties, adding, "It were best pacify the fellows with fair words. They might," he said, "be Dunkirkers, or insolent man-of-war's-men on a frolic."

"No, no," answered Magnus, "it is the sloop which the Jagger told us of. But I will take your advice. I will have patience for these girls' sakes; yet——"

He had no time to conclude the sentence, for Bunce jumped on board with his party, and drawing his cutlass struck it upon the companion-ladder, and declared the ship was theirs.

"By what warrant or authority do you stop us on the high seas?" said Magnus.

"Here are half a dozen of warrants," said Bunce, showing the pistols which were hung round him, according to a pirate fashion already mentioned; "choose which you like, old gentleman, and you shall have the perusal of it presently."

"That is to say, you intend to rob us?" said Magnus. "So be it; we have no means to help it—only be civil to the women, and take what you please from the vessel. There is not much, but I will and can make it worth more if you use us well."

"Civil to the women!" said Fletcher, who had also come on board with the gang, "when were we else than civil to them—ay, and kind to boot? Look here, Jack Bunce! what a trim-going little thing here is! By G—, she shall make a cruise with us, come of old Squaretoes what will!"

He seized upon the terrified Brenda with one hand, and insolently pulled back with the other the hood of the mantle in which she had muffled herself.

"Help, father! help, Minna!" exclaimed the affrighted girl; unconscious, at the moment, that they were unable to render her assistance.

Magnus again uplifted the handspike, but Bunce stopped his hand. "Avast, father!" he said, "or you will make a bad voyage of it presently. And you, Fletcher, let go the girl!"

"And, d—n me! why should I let her go?" said Fletcher.

"Because I command you, Dick," said the other, "and because I'll make it a quarrel else. And now let me know, beauties, is there one of you bears that queer heathen name of Minna, for which I have a certain sort of regard?"

"Gallant sir!" said Halcro, "unquestionably it is because you have some poetry in your heart."

"I have had enough of it in my mouth in my time," answered Bunce; "but that day is by, old gentleman; however, I shall soon find out which of these girls is Minna. Throw back your mufflings from your faces, and don't be afraid, my Lindamiras; no one here shall meddle with you to do you wrong. On my soul, two pretty wenches! I wish I were at sea in an egg-shell, and a rock under my lee-bow, if I would wish a better leaguer-lass than the worst of them! Hark you, my girls; which of you would like to swing in a rover's hammock? You should have gold for the gathering!"

The terrified maidens clung close together, and grew pale at the bold and familiar language of the desperate libertine.

"Nay, don't be frightened," said he; "no one shall serve under the noble Altamont but by her own free choice; there is no pressing amongst gentlemen of fortune. And do not look so shy upon me neither, as if I spoke of what you never thought of before. One of you, at least, has heard of Captain Cleveland, the Rover."

Brenda grew still paler, but the blood mounted at once in Minna's cheeks on hearing the name of her lover thus unexpectedly introduced; for the scene was in itself so confounding, that the idea of the vessel's being the consort of which Cleveland had spoken at Burgh-Westra had occurred to no one save the Udaller.

"I see how it is," said Bunce, with a familiar nod, "and I will hold my course accordingly. You need not be afraid of any injury, father," he added, addressing Magnus familiarly; "and though I have made many a pretty girl pay tribute in my time, yet yours shall go ashore without either wrong or ransom."

"If you will assure me of that," said Magnus, "you are as welcome to the brig and cargo as ever I made man welcome to a can of punch."

"And it is no bad thing that same can of punch," said Bunce, "if we had any one here that could mix it well."

"I will do it," said Claud Halcro, "with any man that ever squeezed lemon,—Eric Scambester, the punch-maker of Burgh-Westra, being alone excepted."

"And you are within a grapnel's length of him, too," said the Udaller. "Go down below, my girls," he added, "and send up the rare old man and the punch-bowl."

"The punch-bowl!" said Fletcher; "I say, the bucket, d—n me! Talk of bowls in the cabin of a paltry merchantman, but not to gentlemen-strollers—rovers, I would say," correcting himself, as he observed that Bunce looked sour at the mistake.

"And, I say, these two pretty girls shall stay on deck, and fill my can," said Bunce. "I deserve some attendance, at least, for all my generosity."

"And they shall fill mine too," said Fletcher. "They shall fill it to

the brim! and I will have a kiss for every drop they spill, broil me if I won't!"

"'No one shall serve under the noble Altamont but by her own free choice'" (p. 400).

"Why, then, I tell you, you sha'n't!" said Bunce; "for I'll be d—d if any one shall kiss Minna but one, and that's neither you nor I;

and her other little bit of a consort shall 'scape for company; there are plenty of willing wenches in Orkney. And so, now I think on it, these girls shall go down below, and bolt themselves into the cabin; and we shall have the punch up here on deck, *al fresco*, as the old gentleman proposes."

"Why, Jack, I wish you knew your own mind," said Fletcher; "I have been your messmate these two years, and I love you; and yet flay me like a wild bullock, if you have not as many humours as a monkey! And what shall we have to make a little fun of, since you have sent the girls down below?"

"Why, we will have Master Punch-maker here," answered Bunce, "to give us toasts, and sings us songs. And, in the meantime, you there, stand by sheets and tacks, and get her under way! And you, steersman, as you would keep your brains in your skull, keep her under the stern of the sloop. If you attempt to play us any trick, I will scuttle your sconce as if it were an old calabash!"

The vessel was accordingly got under way, and moved slowly on in the wake of the sloop, which, as had been previously agreed upon, held her course, not to return to the Bay of Kirkwall, but for an excellent roadstead called Inganess Bay, formed by a promontory which extends to the eastward two or three miles from the Orcadian metropolis, and where the vessels might conveniently lie at anchor while the rovers maintained any communication with the magistrates which the new state of things seemed to require.

Meantime Claud Halcro had exerted his utmost talents in compounding a bucketful of punch for the use of the pirates, which they drank out of large cans; the ordinary seamen, as well as Bunce and Fletcher, who acted as officers, dipping them into the bucket with very little ceremony as they came and went upon their duty. Magnus, who was particularly apprehensive that liquor might awaken the brutal passions of these desperadoes, was yet so much astonished at the quantities which he saw them drink without producing any visible effect upon their reason, that he could not help expressing his surprise to Bunce himself, who, wild as he was, yet appeared by far the most civil and conversable of his party, and whom he was, perhaps, desirous to conciliate, by a compliment of which all boon topers know the value.

"Bones of Saint Magnus!" said the Udaller, "I used to think I took off my can like a gentleman; but to see your men swallow, Captain, one would think their stomachs were as bottomless as the hole of Laifell in Foula, which I have sounded myself with a line of a hundred fathoms. By my soul, the Bicker of Saint Magnus were but a sip to them!"

"In our way of life, sir," answered Bunce, "there is no stint till duty calls or the puncheon is drunk out."

"By my word, sir," said Claud Halcro, "I believe there is not one of your people but could drink out the mickle bicker of Scarpa, which

was always offered to the Bishop of Orkney brimful of the best bummock that ever was brewed." *

"If drinking could make them bishops," said Bunce, "I should have a reverend crew of them; but as they have no other clerical qualities about them, I do not propose that they shall get drunk to-day; so we will cut our drink with a song."

"And I'll sing it, by ——!" said or swore Dick Fletcher, and instantly struck up the old ditty—

> "It was a ship, and a ship of fame,
> Launch'd off the stocks, bound for the main,
> With a hundred and fifty brisk young men,
> All pick'd and chosen every one."

"I would sooner be keel-hauled than hear that song over again," said Bunce; "and, confound your lantern jaws, you can squeeze nothing else out of them!"

"By ——," said Fletcher, "I will sing my song, whether you like it or no. And again he sung, with the doleful tone of a north-easter whistling through sheet and shrouds—

> "Captain Glen was our captain's name;
> A very gallant and brisk young man;
> As bold a sailor as e'er went to sea,
> And we were bound for High Barbary."

"I tell you again," said Bunce, "we will have none of your screech-owl music here; and I'll be d—d if you shall sit here and make that infernal noise!"

"Why, then, I'll tell you what," said Fletcher, getting up, "I'll sing when I walk about, and I hope there is no harm in that, Jack Bunce." And so, getting up from his seat, he began to walk up and down the sloop, croaking out his long and disastrous ballad.

"You see how I manage them," said Bunce, with a smile of self-applause; "allow that fellow two strides on his own way, and you make a mutineer of him for life. But I tie him strict up, and he follows me as kindly as a fowler's spaniel after he has got a good beating. And now your toast and your song, sir," addressing Halcro; "or rather your song without your toast. I have got a toast for myself. Here is success to all roving blades, and confusion to all honest men!"

"I should be sorry to drink that toast, if I could help it," said Magnus Troil.

"What! you reckon yourself one of the honest folks, I warrant?" said Bunce. "Tell me your trade, and I'll tell you what I think of it. As for the punch-maker here, I knew him at first glance to be a tailor, who has, therefore, no more pretensions to be honest than he has not to be mangy. But you are some High-Dutch skipper, I warrant me, that tramples on the cross when he is in Japan, and denies his religion for a day's gain."

* Liquor brewed for a Christmas treat.

"No," replied the Udaller, "I am a gentleman of Zetland."

"Oh, what!" retorted the satirical Mr. Bunce, "you are come from the happy climate where gin is a groat a bottle, and where there is daylight for ever?"

"At your service, Captain," said the Udaller, suppressing with much pain some disposition to resent these jests on his country, although under every risk, and at all disadvantage.

"At *my* service!" said Bunce. "Ay, if there was a rope stretched from the wreck to the beach, you would be at my service to cut the hawser, make *floatsome* and *jetsome* of ship and cargo, and well if you did not give me a rap on the head with the back of the cutty-axe; and you call yourself honest? But never mind, here goes the aforesaid toast, and do you sing me a song, Mr. Fashioner; and look it be as good as your punch."

Halcro, internally praying for the powers of a new Timotheus to turn his strain and check his auditor's pride, as glorious John had it, began a heart-soothing ditty with the following lines,—

"Maidens fresh as fairest rose,
Listen to this lay of mine."

"I will hear nothing of maidens or roses," said Bunce; "it puts me in mind what sort of a cargo we have got on board; and, by ——, I will be true to my messmate and my captain as long as I can! And now I think on't I'll have no more punch either—that last cup made innovation, and I am not to play Cassio to-night—and if I drink not, nobody else shall."

So saying, he manfully kicked over the bucket, which, notwithstanding the repeated applications made to it, was still half full, got up from his seat, shook himself a little to rights, as he expressed it, cocked his hat, and, walking the quarter-deck with an air of dignity, gave, by word and signal, the orders for bringing the ships to anchor, which were readily obeyed by both, Goffe being then, in all probability, past any rational state of interference.

The Udaller in the meantime condoled with Halcro on their situation. "It is bad enough," said the tough old Norseman, "for these are rank rogues—and yet, were it not for the girls, I should not fear them. That young vapouring fellow, who seems to command, is not such a born devil as he might have been."

"He has queer humours, though," said Halcro; "and I wish we were loose from him. To kick down a bucket half full of the best punch ever was made, and to cut me short in the sweetest song I ever wrote—I promise you, I do not know what he may do next; it is next door to madness."

Meanwhile, the ships being brought to anchor, the valiant Lieutenant Bunce called upon Fletcher, and, resuming his seat by his unwilling passengers, he told them they should see what message

he was about to send to the wittols of Kirkwall, as they were something concerned in it. "It shall run in Dick's name," he said, "as well as in mine. I love to give the poor young fellow a little countenance now and then—don't I, Dick, you d—d stupid ass?"

"Why, yes, Jack Bunce," said Dick, "I can't say but as you do—only you are always bullocking one about something or other, too—but, howsomdever, d'ye see ——"

"Enough said—belay your jaw, Dick," said Bunce, and proceeded to write his epistle, which, being read aloud, proved to be of the following tenor: "For the Mayor and Aldermen of Kirkwall—Gentlemen, As, contrary to your good faith given, you have not sent us on board a hostage for the safety of our Captain, remaining on shore at your request, these come to tell you we are not thus to be trifled with. We have already in our possession a brig, with a family of distinction, its owners and passengers; and as you deal with our Captain, so will we deal with them in every respect. And as this is the first, so assure yourselves it shall not be the last damage which we will do to your town and trade, if you do not send on board our Captain, and supply us with stores according to treaty.

"Given on board the brig *Mergoose* of Burgh-Westra, lying in Inganess Bay. Witness our hands, commanders of the *Fortune's Favourite*, and gentlemen adventurers."

He then subscribed himself Frederick Altamont, and handed the letter to Fletcher, who read the said subscription with much difficulty; and, admiring the sound of it very much, swore he would have a new name himself, and the rather that Fletcher was the most crabbed word to spell and conster, he believed, in the whole dictionary. He subscribed himself accordingly, Timothy Tugmutton.

"Will you not add a few lines to the coxcombs?" said Bunce, addressing Magnus.

"Not I," returned the Udaller, stubborn in his ideas of right and wrong, even in so formidable an emergency. "The magistrates of Kirkwall know their duty, and were I they ——" But here the recollection that his daughters were at the mercy of these ruffians blanked the bold visage of Magnus Troil, and checked the defiance which was just about to issue from his lips.

"D—n me," said Bunce, who easily conjectured what was passing in the mind of his prisoner, "that pause would have told well on the stage; it would have brought down pit, box, and gallery, egad, as Bayes has it."

"I will hear nothing of Bayes," said Claud Halcro (himself a little elevated), "it is an impudent satire on glorious John; but he tickled Buckingham off for it—

> 'In the first rank of these did Zimri stand;
> A man so various——'"

"Hold your peace!" said Bunce, drowning the voice of the admirer of Dryden in louder and more vehement asseveration, "the *Rehearsal* is the best farce ever was written, and I'll make him kiss the gunner's daughter that denies it. D—n me, I was the best Prince Prettyman ever walked the boards—

'Sometimes a fisher's son, sometimes a prince.'

But let us to business. Hark ye, old gentleman" (to Magnus), "you have a sort of sulkiness about you, for which some of my profession would cut your ears out of your head, and broil them for your dinner with red pepper. I have known Goffe do so to a poor devil for looking sour and dangerous when he saw his sloop go to Davy Jones's locker with his only son on board. But I'm a spirit of another sort; and if you or the ladies are ill used it shall be the Kirkwall people's fault, and not mine, and that's fair; and so you had better let them know your condition, and your circumstances, and so forth,—and that's fair, too."

Magnus, thus exhorted, took up the pen, and attempted to write; but his high spirit so struggled with his paternal anxiety that his hand refused its office. "I cannot help it," he said, after one or two illegible attempts to write, "I cannot form a letter, if all our lives depended upon it."

And he could not, with his utmost efforts, so suppress the convulsive emotions which he experienced, but that they agitated his whole frame. The willow which bends to the tempest often escapes better than the oak which resists it; and so, in great calamities, it sometimes happens that light and frivolous spirits recover their elasticity and presence of mind sooner than those of a loftier character. In the present case, Claud Halcro was fortunately able to perform the task which the deeper feelings of his friend and patron refused. He took the pen, and, in as few words as possible, explained the situation in which they were placed, and the cruel risks to which they were exposed, insinuating at the same time, as delicately as he could express it, that, to the magistrates of the country, the life and honour of its citizens should be a dearer object than even the apprehension or punishment of the guilty; taking care, however, to qualify the last expression as much as possible, for fear of giving umbrage to the pirates.

Bunce read over the letter, which fortunately met his approbation; and, on seeing the name of Claud Halcro at the bottom, he exclaimed, in great surprise, and with more energetic expressions of asseveration than we choose to record, "Why, you are the little fellow that played the fiddle to old Manager Gadabout's company, at Hogs Norton, the first season I came out there! I thought I knew your catchword of glorious John."

At another time this recognition might not have been very grateful to Halcro's minstrel pride; but, as matters stood with him, the discovery of a golden mine could not have made him more happy. He instantly

remembered the very hopeful young performer who came out in Don Sebastian, and judiciously added, that the muse of glorious John had never received such excellent support during the time that he was first (he might have added, and only) violin to Mr. Gadabout's company.

"Why, yes," said Bunce, "I believe you are right; I think I might have shaken the scene as well as Booth or Betterton either. But I was destined to figure on other boards" (striking his foot upon the deck), "and I believe I must stick by them till I find no board at all to support me. But now, old acquaintance, I will do something for you—slue yourself this way a bit; I would have you solus." They leaned over the taffrail, while Bunce whispered, with more seriousness than he usually showed, "I am sorry for this honest old heart of Norway pine—blight me if I am not—and for the daughters too; besides, I have my own reasons for befriending one of them. I can be a wild fellow with a willing lass of the game; but to such decent and innocent creatures—d—n me, I am Scipio at Numantia, and Alexander in the tent of Darius. You remember how I touch off Alexander?" (Here he started into heroics.)

"'Thus from the grave I rise to save my love;
All draw your swords, with wings of lightning move.
When I rush on, sure none will dare to stay—
'Tis beauty calls, and glory shows the way.'"

Claud Halcro failed not to bestow the necessary commendations on his declamation, declaring that, in his opinion as an honest man, he had always thought Mr. Altamont's giving that speech far superior in tone and energy to Betterton.

Bunce, or Altamont, wrung his hand tenderly. "Ah, you flatter me, my dear friend," he said; "yet, why had not the public some of your judgment!—I should not then have been at this pass. Heaven knows, my dear Mr. Halcro—Heaven knows with what pleasure I could keep you on board with me, just that I might have one friend who loves as much to hear, as I do to recite, the choicest pieces of our finest dramatic authors. The most of us are beasts; and, for the Kirkwall hostage yonder, he uses me, egad, as I use Fletcher, I think, and huffs me the more, the more I do for him. But how delightful it would be in a tropic night, when the ship was hanging on the breeze, with a broad and steady sail, for me to rehearse Alexander, with you for my pit, box, and gallery! Nay (for you are a follower of the muses, as I remember), who knows but you and I might be the means of inspiring, like Orpheus and Eurydice, a pure taste into our companions, and softening their manners, while we excited their better feelings?"

This was spoken with so much unction, that Claud Halcro began to be afraid he had both made the actual punch over potent, and mixed too many bewitching ingredients in the cup of flattery which he had administered; and that, under the influence of both potions, the sentimental pirate might detain him by force, merely to realise the

scenes which his imagination presented. The conjuncture was, however, too delicate to admit of any active effort, on Halcro's part, to redeem his blunder, and therefore he only returned the tender pressure of his friend's hand, and uttered the interjection "alas!" in as pathetic a tone as he could.

Bunce immediately resumed: "You are right, my friend; these are but vain visions of felicity, and it remains but for the unhappy Altamont to serve the friend to whom he is now to bid farewell. I have determined to put you and the two girls ashore, with Fletcher for your protection; and so call up the young women, and let them begone before the devil get aboard of me, or of some one else. You will carry my letter to the magistrates, and second it with your own eloquence, and assure them that, if they hurt but one hair of Cleveland's head, there will be the devil to pay, and no pitch hot."

Relieved at heart by this unexpected termination of Bunce's harangue, Halcro descended the companion ladder two steps at a time, and knocking at the cabin door, could scarce find intelligible language enough to say his errand. The sisters hearing, with unexpected joy, that they were to be set ashore, muffled themselves in their cloaks, and, when they learned that the boat was hoisted out, came hastily on deck, where they were apprised for the first time, to their great horror, that their father was still to remain on board of the pirate.

"We will remain with him at every risk," said Minna; "we may be of some assistance to him, were it but for an instant; we will live and die with him!"

"We shall aid him more surely," said Brenda, who comprehended the nature of their situation better than Minna, "by interesting the people of Kirkwall to grant these gentlemen's demands."

"Spoken like an angel of sense and beauty," said Bunce; "and now away with you; for, d—n me, if this is not like having a lighted linstock in the powder-room—if you speak another word more, confound me if I know how I shall bring myself to part with you!"

"Go, in God's name, my daughters," said Magnus. "I am in God's hand; and when you are gone I shall care little for myself; and I shall think and say, as long as I live, that this good gentleman deserves a better trade. Go, go, away with you!" for they yet lingered in reluctance to leave him.

"Stay not to kiss," said Bunce, "for fear I be tempted to ask my share. Into the boat with you—yet stop an instant." He drew the three captives apart. "Fletcher," said he, "will answer for the rest of the fellows, and will see you safe off the sea beach. But how to answer for Fletcher I know not, except by trusting Mr. Halcro with this little guarantee."

He offered the minstrel a small double-barrelled pistol, which, he said, was loaded with a brace of balls. Minna observed Halcro's hand tremble as he stretched it out to take the weapon. "Give it to me, sir,"

she said, taking it from the outlaw; "and trust to me for defending my sister and myself."

"Bravo, bravo!" shouted Bunce. "There spoke a wench worthy of Cleveland, the King of Rovers!"

"Cleveland!" repeated Minna, "do you then know that Cleveland, whom you have twice named?"

"Know him! Is there a man alive," said Bunce, "that knows better than I do the best and stoutest fellow ever stepped betwixt stem and stern? When he is out of the bilboes, as please Heaven he shall

"He offered the minstrel a small double-barrelled pistol" (p. 408).

soon be, I reckon to see you come on board of us, and reign the queen of every sea we sail over. You have got the little guardian; I suppose you know how to use it? If Fletcher behaves ill to you, you need only draw up this piece of iron with your thumb, so—and if he persists, it is but crooking your pretty forefinger thus, and I shall lose the most dutiful messmate that ever man had; though, d—n the dog, he will deserve his death if he disobeys my orders. And now, into the boat; but stay, one kiss for Cleveland's sake."

Brenda, in deadly terror, endured his courtesy, but Minna, stepping back with disdain, offered her hand. Bunce laughed, but kissed, with a theatrical air, the fair hand which she extended as a ransom for her

lips, and at length the sisters and Halcro were placed in the boat, which rowed off under Fletcher's command.

Bunce stood on the quarter-deck, soliloquising after the manner of his original profession. "Were this told at Port Royal now, or at the isle of Providence, or in the Petits Guaves, I wonder what they would say of me! Why, that I was a good-natured milksop, a Jack-a-lent, an ass. Well, let them. I have done enough of bad to think about it; it is worth while doing one good action, if it were but for the rarity of the thing, and to put one in good humour with oneself." Then, turning to Magnus Troil, he proceeded, "By —— these are bonarobas, these daughters of yours! The eldest would make her fortune on the London boards. What a dashing attitude the wench had with her, as she seized the pistol! D—n me, that touch would have brought the house down! What a Roxalana the jade would have made!" (for, in his oratory, Bunce, like Sancho's gossip, Thomas Cecial, was apt to use the most energetic word which came to hand, without accurately considering its propriety.) "I would give my share of the next prize but to hear her spout—

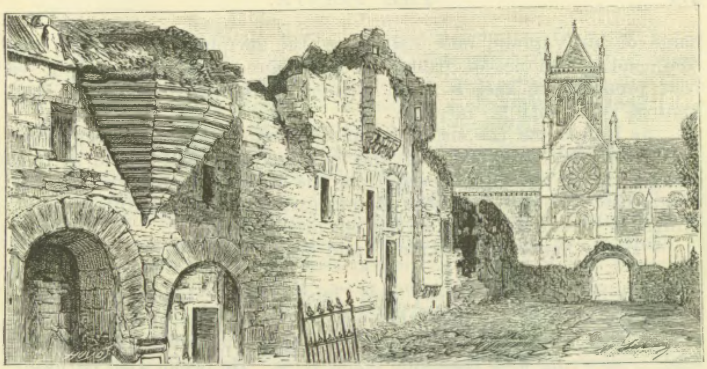
> 'Away, begone, and give a whirlwind room,
> Or I will blow you up like dust. Avaunt!
> Madness but meanly represents my rage.'

And then, again, that little, soft, shy, tearful trembler, for Statira, to hear her recite—

> 'He speaks the kindest words, and looks such things,
> Vows with such passion, swears with so much grace,
> That 'tis a kind of heaven to be deluded by him.'

What a play we might have run up! I was a beast not to think of it before I sent them off—I to be Alexander, Claud Halcro, Lysimachus—this old gentleman might have made a Clytus, for a pinch. I was an idiot not to think of it!"

There was much in this effusion which might have displeased the Udaller; but, to speak truth, he paid no attention to it. His eye, and, finally, his spy-glass, were employed in watching the return of his daughters to the shore. He saw them land on the beach, and, accompanied by Halcro, and another man (Fletcher, doubtless), he saw them ascend the acclivity, and proceed upon the road to Kirkwall; and he could even distinguish that Minna, as if considering herself as the guardian of the party, walked a little aloof from the rest, on the watch, as it seemed, against surprise, and ready to act as occasion should require. At length, as the Udaller was just about to lose sight of them, he had the exquisite satisfaction to see the party halt, and the pirate leave them, after a space just long enough for a civil farewell, and proceed slowly back on his return to the beach. Blessing the Great Being who had thus relieved him from the most agonising fears which a father can feel, the worthy Udaller, from that instant, stood resigned to his own fate, whatever that might be.



CHAPTER XXXVII.

"Over the mountains and under the waves,
Over the fountains and under the graves,
Over floods that are deepest,
Which Neptune obey,
Over rocks that are steepest,
Love will find out the way."

Old Song.

THE parting of Fletcher from Claud Halcro and the sisters of Burgh-Westra, on the spot where it took place, was partly occasioned by a small party of armed men being seen at a distance in the act of advancing from Kirkwall, an apparition hidden from the Udaller's spy-glass by the swell of the ground, but quite visible to the pirate, whom it determined to consult his own safety by a speedy return to his boat. He was just turning away, when Minna occasioned the short delay which her father had observed.

"Stop," she said; "I command you! Tell your leader from me, that whatever the answer may be from Kirkwall, he shall carry his vessel, nevertheless, round to Stromness; and, being anchored there, let him send a boat ashore for Captain Cleveland when he shall see a smoke on the Bridge of Broisgar."

Fletcher had thought, like his messmate Bunce, of asking a kiss, at least, for the trouble of escorting these beautiful young women; and perhaps neither the terror of the approaching Kirkwall men, nor of Minna's weapon, might have prevented his being insolent. But the

name of his Captain, and, still more, the unappalled, dignified, and commanding manner of Minna Troil, overawed him. He made a sea bow, promised to keep a sharp look-out, and, returning to his boat, went on board with his message.

As Halcro and the sisters advanced towards the party whom they saw on the Kirkwall road, and who, on their part, had halted as if to observe them, Brenda, relieved from the fears of Fletcher's presence, which had hitherto kept her silent, exclaimed, "Merciful Heaven! Minna, in what hands have we left our dear father?"

"In the hands of brave men," said Minna steadily; "I fear not for him."

"As brave as you please," said Claud Halcro, "but very dangerous rogues for all that. I know that fellow Altamont, as he calls himself, though that is not his right name neither, as deboshed a dog as ever made a barn ring with blood and blank verse. He began with Barnwell, and everybody thought he would end with the gallows, like the last scene in *Venice Preserved*."

"It matters not," said Minna; "the wilder the waves, the more powerful is the voice that rules them. The name alone of Cleveland ruled the mood of the fiercest amongst them."

"I am sorry for Cleveland," said Brenda, "if such are his companions; but I care little for him in comparison to my father."

"Reserve your compassion for those who need it," said Minna, "and fear nothing for our father. God knows, every silver hair on his head is to me worth the treasure of an unsunned mine; but I know that he is safe while in yonder vessel, and I know that he will be soon safe on shore."

"I would I could see it," said Claud Halcro; "but I fear the Kirkwall people, supposing Cleveland to be such as I dread, will not dare to exchange him against the Udaller. The Scots have very severe laws against theft-boot, as they call it."

"But who are those on the road before us?" said Brenda; "and why do they halt there so jealously?"

"They are a patrol of the militia," answered Halcro. "Glorious John touches them off a little sharply; but then John was a Jacobite:

> 'Mouths without hands, maintain'd at vast expense,
> In peace a charge, in war a weak defence;
> Stout once a month, they march, a blustering band,
> And ever, but in time of need, at hand.'

I fancy they halted just now, taking us, as they saw us on the brow of the hill, for a party of the sloop's men, and now they can distinguish that you wear petticoats they are moving on again."

They came on accordingly, and proved to be, as Claud Halcro had suggested, a patrol sent out to watch the motions of the pirates, and to prevent their attempting descents to damage the country.

They heartily congratulated Claud Halcro, who was well known to

more than one of them, upon his escape from captivity; and the commander of the party, while offering every assistance to the ladies, could not help condoling with them on the circumstances in which their father stood, hinting, though in a delicate and doubtful manner, the difficulties which might be in the way of his liberation.

When they arrived at Kirkwall, and obtained an audience of the Provost, and one or two of the magistrates, these difficulties were more plainly insisted upon. "The *Halcyon* frigate is upon the coast," said the Provost; "she was seen off Duncansbay Head; and, though I have the deepest respect for Mr. Troil of Burgh-Westra, yet I shall be answerable to law if I release from prison the Captain of this suspicious vessel, on account of the safety of any individual who may be unhappily endangered by his detention. This man is now known to be the heart and soul of these buccaneers, and am I at liberty to send him aboard, that he may plunder the country, or perhaps go fight the King's ship—for he has impudence enough for anything?"

"*Courage* enough for anything, you mean, Mr. Provost," said Minna, unable to restrain her displeasure.

"Why, you may call it as you please, Miss Troil," said the worthy magistrate; "but, in my opinion, that sort of courage which proposes to fight singly against two, is little better than a kind of practical impudence."

"But our father?" said Brenda, in a tone of the most earnest entreaty, "our father—the friend, I may say the father, of his country—to whom so many look for kindness, and so many for actual support, whose loss would be the extinction of a beacon in a storm—will you indeed weigh the risk which he runs against such a trifling thing as letting an unfortunate man from prison, to seek his unhappy fate elsewhere?"

"Miss Brenda is right," said Claud Halcro; "I am for let-a-be for let-a-be, as the boys say; and never fash about a warrant of liberation, Provost; but just take a fool's counsel, and let the goodman of the jail forget to draw his bolt on the wicket, or leave a chink of a window open, or the like, and we shall be rid of the rover, and have the one best honest fellow in Orkney or Zetland on the lee-side of a bowl of punch with us in five hours."

The Provost replied in nearly the same terms as before, that he had the highest respect for Mr. Magnus Troil of Burgh-Westra, but that he could not suffer his consideration for any individual, however respectable, to interfere with the discharge of his duty.

Minna then addressed her sister in a tone of calm and sarcastic displeasure. "You forget," she said, "Brenda, that you are talking of the safety of a poor insignificant Udaller of Zetland, to no less a person than the Chief Magistrate of the metropolis of Orkney. Can you expect so great a person to condescend to such a trifling subject of consideration? It will be time enough for the Provost to think of complying with the

terms sent to him—for comply with them at length he both must and will—when the Church of Saint Magnus is beat down about his ears."

"You may be angry with me, my pretty young lady," said the good-humoured Provost Torfe, "but I cannot be offended with you. The Church of Saint Magnus has stood many a day, and, I think, will outlive both you and me, much more yonder pack of unhanged dogs. And besides that your father is half an Orkneyman, and has both estate and friends among us, I would, I give you my word, do as much for a Zetlander in distress as I would for any one, excepting one of our own native Kirkwallers, who are doubtless to be preferred. And if you will take up your lodgings here with my wife and myself, we will endeavour to show you," continued he, "that you are as welcome in Kirkwall as ever you could be in Lerwick or Scalloway."

Minna deigned no reply to this good-humoured invitation, but Brenda declined it in civil terms, pleading the necessity of taking up their abode with a wealthy widow of Kirkwall, a relation, who already expected them.

Halcro made another attempt to move the Provost, but found him inexorable. "The Collector of the Customs had already threatened," he said, "to inform against him for entering into treaty, or, as he called it, packing and peeling with those strangers, even when it seemed the only means of preventing a bloody affray in the town; and, should he now forego the advantage afforded by the imprisonment of Cleveland and the escape of the Factor, he might incur something worse than censure." The burden of the whole was, that "he was sorry for the Udaller, he was sorry even for the lad Cleveland, who had some sparks of honour about him; but his duty was imperious, and must be obeyed." The Provost then precluded farther argument by observing that another affair from Zetland called for his immediate attention. A gentleman named Mertoun, residing at Jarlshof, had made complaint against Snailsfoot the Jagger, for having assisted a domestic of his in embezzling some valuable articles which had been deposited in his custody, and he was about to take examinations on the subject, and cause them to be restored to Mr. Mertoun, who was accountable for them to the right owner.

In all this information there was nothing which seemed interesting to the sisters excepting the word Mertoun, which went like a dagger to the heart of Minna, when she recollected the circumstances under which Mordaunt Mertoun had disappeared, and which, with an emotion less painful, though still of a melancholy nature, called a faint blush into Brenda's cheek, and a slight degree of moisture into her eye. But it was soon evident that the Magistrate spoke not of Mordaunt, but of his father; and the daughters of Magnus, little interested in his detail, took leave of the Provost to go to their own lodgings.

When they arrived at their relation's, Minna made it her business to learn, by such inquiries as she could make without exciting

suspicion, what was the situation of the unfortunate Cleveland, which she soon discovered to be exceedingly precarious. The Provost had not, indeed, committed him to close custody, as Claud Halcro had anticipated, recollecting, perhaps, the favourable circumstances under which he had surrendered himself, and loath, till the moment of the last necessity, altogether to break faith with him. But although left apparently at large, he was strictly watched by persons well armed and appointed for the purpose, who had directions to detain him by force, if he attempted to pass certain narrow precincts which were allotted to him. He was quartered in a strong room within what is called the

"They arrived at Kirkwall, and obtained an audience of the Provost" (p. 413).

King's Castle, and at night his chamber door was locked on the outside, and a sufficient guard mounted to prevent his escape. He therefore enjoyed only the degree of liberty which the cat, in her cruel sport, is sometimes pleased to permit to the mouse which she has clutched; and yet, such was the terror of the resources, the courage, and ferocity of the pirate Captain, that the Provost was blamed by the Collector, and many other sage citizens of Kirkwall, for permitting him to be at large upon any conditions.

It may be well believed that, under such circumstances, Cleveland had no desire to seek any place of public resort, conscious that he was the object of a mixed feeling of curiosity and terror. His favourite

place of exercise, therefore, was the external aisles of the Cathedral of Saint Magnus, of which the eastern end alone is fitted up for public worship. This solemn old edifice, having escaped the ravage which attended the first convulsions of the Reformation, still retains some appearance of episcopal dignity. This place of worship is separated by a screen from the nave and western limb of the cross, and the whole is preserved in a state of cleanliness and decency, which might be well proposed as an example to the proud piles of Westminster and St. Paul's.

It was in this exterior part of the Cathedral that Cleveland was permitted to walk, the rather that his guards, by watching the single open entrance, had the means, with very little inconvenience to themselves, of preventing any possible attempt at escape. The place itself was well suited to his melancholy circumstances. The lofty and vaulted roof rises upon ranges of Saxon pillars, of massive size, four of which, still larger than the rest, once supported the lofty spire, which, long since destroyed by accident, has been rebuilt upon a disproportioned and truncated plan. The light is admitted at the eastern end through a lofty, well-proportioned, and richly ornamented Gothic window; and the pavement is covered with inscriptions, in different languages, distinguishing the graves of noble Orcadians, who have at different times been deposited within the sacred precincts.

Here walked Cleveland, musing over the events of a misspent life, which, it seemed probable, might be brought to a violent and shameful close, while he was yet in the prime of youth. "With these dead," he said, looking on the pavement, "shall I soon be numbered; but no holy man will speak a blessing; no friendly hand register an inscription; no proud descendant sculpture armorial bearings over the grave of the pirate Cleveland. My whitening bones will swing in the gibbet-irons, on some wild beach or lonely cape, that will be esteemed fatal and accursed for my sake. The old mariner, as he passes the Sound, will shake his head, and tell of my name and actions, as a warning to his younger comrades. But, Minna! Minna! what will be thy thoughts when the news reaches thee? Would to God the tidings were drowned in the deepest whirlpool betwixt Kirkwall and Burgh Westra, ere they came to her ear! and oh! would to Heaven that we had never met, since we never can meet again!"

He lifted up his eyes as he spoke, and Minna Troil stood before him. Her face was pale, and her hair dishevelled; but her look was composed and firm, with its usual expression of high-minded melancholy. She was still shrouded in the large mantle which she had assumed on leaving the vessel. Cleveland's first emotion was astonishment; his next was joy, not unmixed with awe. He would have exclaimed, he would have thrown himself at her feet, but she imposed at once silence and composure on him, by raising her finger, and saying, in a low but commanding accent, "Be cautions; we are observed; there are men

without; they let me enter with difficulty. I dare not remain long; they would think—they might believe—oh, Cleveland! I have hazarded everything to save you!"

"To save me? Alas, poor Minna!" answered Cleveland, "to save me is impossible. Enough that I have seen you once more, were it but to say for ever farewell!"

"We must indeed say farewell," said Minna; "for fate and your guilt have divided us for ever. Cleveland, I have seen your associates; need I tell you more? need I say that I know now what a pirate is?"

"You have been in the ruffians' power!" said Cleveland, with a start of agony. "Did they presume——"

"Cleveland," replied Minna, "they presumed nothing; your name was a spell over them. By the power of that spell over these ferocious banditti, and by that alone, I was reminded of the qualities I once thought my Cleveland's!"

"Yes," said Cleveland proudly, "my name has and shall have power over them, when they are at the wildest; and, had they harmed you by one rude word, they should have found—yet what do I rave about? I am a prisoner!"

"You shall be so no longer," said Minna. "Your safety, the safety of my dear father—all demand your instant freedom. I have formed a scheme for your liberty, which, boldly executed, cannot fail. The light is fading without; muffle yourself in my cloak, and you will easily pass the guards. I have given them the means of carousing, and they are deeply engaged. Haste to the Loch of Stennis, and hide yourself till day dawns; then make a smoke on the point where the land, stretching into the lake on each side, divides it nearly in two at the Bridge of Broisgar. Your vessel, which lies not far distant, will send a boat ashore. Do not hesitate an instant!"

"But you, Minna! Should this wild scheme succeed," said Cleveland, "what is to become of you?"

"For my share in your escape," answered the maiden, "the honesty of my own intention will vindicate me in the sight of Heaven; and the safety of my father, whose fate depends on yours, will be my excuse to man."

In a few words she gave him the history of their capture, and its consequences. Cleveland cast up his eyes and raised his hands to Heaven, in thankfulness for the escape of the sisters from his evil companions, and then hastily added, "But you are right, Minna; I must fly, at all rates; for your father's sake I must fly. Here, then, we part; yet not, I trust, for ever."

"For ever!" answered a voice, that sounded as from a sepulchral vault.

They started, looked around them, and then gazed on each other. It seemed as if the echoes of the building had returned Cleveland's last words, but the pronunciation was too emphatically accented.

"Yes, for ever!" said Norna of the Fitful Head, stepping forward from behind one of the massive Saxon pillars which support the roof of the Cathedral. "Here meet the crimson foot and the crimson hand. Well for both that the wound is healed whence that crimson was derived; well for both, but best for him who shed it. Here, then, you meet, and meet for the last time!"

"Not so," said Cleveland, as if about to take Minna's hand; "to separate me from Minna, while I have life, must be the work of herself alone."

"Away!" said Norna, stepping betwixt them, "away with such idle folly! Nourish no vain dreams of future meetings; you part here, and you part for ever. The hawk pairs not with the dove; guilt matches not with innocence. Minna Troil, you look for the last time on this bold and criminal man; Cleveland, you behold Minna for the last time!"

"And dream you," said Cleveland indignantly, "that your mummery imposes on me, and that I am among the fools who see more than trick in your pretended art?"

"Forbear, Cleveland, forbear!" said Minna, her hereditary awe of Norna augmented by the circumstance of her sudden appearance. "Oh, forbear! she is powerful; she is but too powerful. And do you, O Norna, remember my father's safety is linked with Cleveland's."

"And it is well for Cleveland that I do remember it," replied the Pythoness, "and that, for the sake of one, I am here to aid both. You, with your childish purpose of passing one of his bulk and stature under the disguise of a few paltry folds of wadmaal—what would your device have procured him but instant restraint with bolt and shackle? I will save him; I will place him in security on board his bark. But let him renounce these shores for ever, and carry elsewhere the terrors of his sable flag, and his yet blacker name; for if the sun rises twice, and finds him still at anchor, his blood be on his own head. Ay, look to each other, look the last look that I permit to frail affection, and say, if ye *can* say it, Farewell for ever!"

"Obey her," stammered Minna; "remonstrate not, but obey her."

Cleveland, grasping her hand, and kissing it ardently, said, but so low that she only could hear it, "Farewell, Minna, but *not* for ever."

"And now, maiden, begone," said Norna, "and leave the rest to the Reimkennar."

"One word more," said Minna, "and I obey you. Tell me but if I have caught aright your meaning. Is Mordaunt Mertoun safe and recovered?"

"Recovered, and safe," said Norna; "else woe to the hand that shed his blood!"

Minna slowly sought the door of the Cathedral, and turned back from time to time to look at the shadowy form of Norna, and the stately and military figure of Cleveland, as they stood together in the deepening gloom of the ancient Cathedral. When she looked back a second time

"'And now, maiden, begone,' said Norna, 'and leave the rest to the Reimkennar'" (p. 418).

they were in motion, and Cleveland followed the matron, as, with a slow and solemn step, she glided towards one of the side aisles. When Minna looked back a third time their figures were no longer visible.

She collected herself, and walked on to the eastern door by which she had entered, and listened for an instant to the guard, who talked together on the outside.

"The Zetland girl stays a long time with this pirate fellow," said one. "I wish they have not more to speak about than the ransom of her father."

"Ay, truly," answered another; "the wenches will have more sympathy with a handsome young pirate than an old bed-ridden burgher."

Their discourse was here interrupted by her of whom they were speaking; and, as if taken in the manner, they pulled off their hats, made their awkward obeisances, and looked not a little embarrassed and confused.

Minna returned to the house where she lodged much affected, yet, on the whole pleased with the result of her expedition, which seemed to put her father out of danger, and assured her at once of the escape of Cleveland, and of the safety of young Mordaunt. She hastened to communicate both pieces of intelligence to Brenda, who joined her in thankfulness to Heaven, and was herself well-nigh persuaded to believe in Norna's supernatural pretensions, so much was she pleased with the manner in which they had been employed. Some time was spent in exchanging their mutual congratulations, and mingling tears of hope, mixed with apprehension; when, at a late hour in the evening, they were interrupted by Claud Halcro, who, full of a fidgeting sort of importance, not unmingled with fear, came to acquaint them that the prisoner, Cleveland, had disappeared from the Cathedral in which he had been permitted to walk, and that the Provost, having been informed that Minna was accessary to his flight, was coming, in a mighty quandary, to make inquiry into the circumstances.

When the worthy Magistrate arrived, Minna did not conceal from him her own wish that Cleveland should make his escape, as the only means which she saw of redeeming her father from imminent danger. But that she had any actual accession to his flight she positively denied, and stated, that "she had parted from Cleveland in the Cathedral more than two hours since, and then left him in company with a third person, whose name she did not conceive herself obliged to communicate."

"It is not needful, Miss Minna Troil," answered Provost Torfe; "for, although no person but this Captain Cleveland and yourself was seen to enter the Kirk of St. Magnus this day, we know well enough that your cousin, old Ulla Troil, whom you Zetlanders call Norna of Fitful Head, has been cruising up and down, upon sea and land, and air, for what I know, in boats and on ponies, and it may be on broomsticks; and here has been her dumb Drow, too, coming and going, and playing the spy on every one; and a good spy he is, for he can hear everything, and tells nothing again, unless to his mistress. And we know, besides, that she can enter the Kirk when all the doors are

fast, and has been seen there more than once—God save us from the Evil One! And so, without farther questions asked, I conclude it was old Norna whom you left in the Kirk with this slashing blade; and, if so, they may catch them again that can. I cannot but say, however, pretty Mistress Minna, that you Zetland folks seem to forget both law and gospel, when you use the help of witchcraft to fetch delinquents out of a legal prison; and the least that you, or your cousin, or your father, can do, is to use influence with this wild fellow to go away as soon as possible, without hurting the town or trade, and then there will be little harm in what has chanced; for, Heaven knows, I did not seek the poor lad's life, so I could get my hands free of him without blame; and far less did I wish that, through his imprisonment, any harm should come to worthy Magnus Troil of Burgh Westra."

"I see where the shoe pinches you, Mr. Provost," said Claud Halcro, "and I am sure I can answer for my friend Mr. Troil, as well as for myself, that we will say and do all in our power with this man, Captain Cleveland, to make him leave the coast directly."

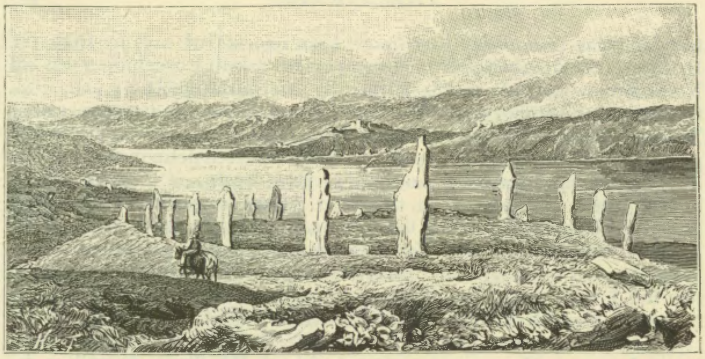
"And I," said Minna, "am so convinced that what you recommend is best for all parties, that my sister and I will set off early to-morrow morning to the House of Stennis, if Mr. Halcro will give us his escort, to receive my father when he comes ashore, that we may acquaint him with your wish, and to use every influence to induce this unhappy man to leave the country."

Provost Torfe looked upon her with some surprise. "It is not every young woman," he said, "would wish to move eight miles nearer to a band of pirates."

"We run no risk," said Claud Halcro, interfering. "The House of Stennis is strong; and my cousin, whom it belongs to, has men and arms within it. The young ladies are as safe there as in Kirkwall; and much good may arise from an early communication between Magnus Troil and his daughters. And happy am I to see that, in your case, my good old friend, as glorious John says,—

'. . . After much debate,
The man prevails above the magistrate.'"

The Provost smiled, nodded his head, and indicated, as far as he thought he could do so with decency, how happy he should be if the *Fortune's Favourite*, and her disorderly crew, would leave Orkney without further interference or violence on either side. He could not authorise their being supplied from the shore, he said; but, either for fear or favour, they were certain to get provisions at Stromness. This pacific magistrate then took leave of Halcro and the two ladies, who proposed the next morning to transfer their residence to the House of Stennis, situated upon the banks of the salt-water lake of the same name, and about four miles by water from the Road of Stromness, where the Rover's vessel was lying.



CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"Fly, Fleance, fly! Thou mayst escape."

Macbeth.

IT was one branch of the various arts by which Norna endeavoured to maintain her pretensions to supernatural powers, that she made herself familiarly and practically acquainted with all the secret passes and recesses, whether natural or artificial, which she could hear of, whether by tradition or otherwise, and was, by such knowledge, often enabled to perform feats which were otherwise unaccountable. Thus, when she escaped from the tabernacle at Burgh Westra, it was by a sliding board which covered a secret passage in the wall, known to none but herself and Magnus, who, she was well assured, would not betray her. The profusion, also, with which she lavished a considerable income, otherwise of no use to her, enabled her to procure the earliest intelligence respecting whatever she desired to know, and, at the same time, to secure all other assistance necessary to carry her plans into effect. Cleveland, upon the present occasion, had reason to admire both her sagacity and her resources.

Upon her applying a little forcible pressure, a door which was concealed under some rich wooden sculpture in the screen which divides the eastern aisle from the rest of the Cathedral, opened, and disclosed a dark narrow winding passage, into which she entered, telling Cleveland, in a whisper, to follow, and be sure he shut the door behind him. He obeyed, and followed her in darkness and silence, sometimes descending

steps, of the number of which she always apprised him, sometimes ascending, and often turning at short angles. The air was more free than he could have expected, the passage being ventilated at different parts by unseen and ingeniously contrived spiracles, which communicated with the open air. At length their long course ended by Norna drawing aside a sliding panel, which, opening behind a wooden, or box-bed, as it is called in Scotland, admitted them into an ancient, but very mean apartment, having a latticed window and a groined roof. The furniture was much dilapidated; and its only ornaments were, on the one side of the wall, a garland of faded ribbons, such as are used to decorate whale vessels; and, on the other, an escutcheon, bearing an Earl's arms and coronet, surrounded by the usual emblems of mortality. The mattock and spade, which lay in one corner, together with the appearance of an old man, who, in a rusty black coat and slouched hat, sat reading by a table, announced that they were in the habitation of the church beadle, or sexton, and in the presence of that respectable functionary.

When his attention was attracted by the noise of the sliding panel, he arose, and, testifying much respect, but no surprise, took his shadowy hat from his thin grey locks, and stood uncovered in the presence of Norna with an air of profound humility.

"Be faithful," said Norna to the old man, "and beware you show not any living mortal the secret path to the Sanctuary."

The old man bowed, in token of obedience and of thanks, for she put money in his hand as she spoke. With a faltering voice he expressed his hope that she would remember his son, who was on the Greenland voyage, that he might return fortunate and safe, as he had done last year, when he brought back the garland, pointing to that upon the wall.

"My cauldron shall boil, and my rhyme shall be said in his behalf," answered Norna. "Waits Pacolet without with the horses?"

The old Sexton assented, and the Pythoness, commanding Cleveland to follow her, went through a back door of the apartment into a small garden, corresponding, in its desolate appearance, to the habitation they had just quitted. The low and broken wall easily permitted them to pass into another and larger garden, though not much better kept, and a gate, which was upon the latch, let them into a long and winding lane, through which, Norna having whispered to her companion that it was the only dangerous place on their road, they walked with a hasty pace. It was now nearly dark, and the inhabitants of the poor dwellings, on either hand, had betaken themselves to their houses. They saw only one woman, who was looking from her door, but blessed herself, and retired into her house with precipitation, when she saw the tall figure of Norna stalk past her with long strides. The lane conducted them into the country, where the dumb dwarf waited with three horses, ensconced behind the wall of a deserted shed. On one of these Norna

instantly seated herself, Cleveland mounted another, and, followed by Pacolet on the third, they moved sharply on through the darkness; the active and spirited animals on which they rode being of a breed rather taller than those reared in Zetland.

After more than an hour's smart riding, in which Norna acted as guide, they stopped before a hovel, so utterly desolate in appearance, that it resembled rather a cattle-shed than a cottage.

"Here you must remain till dawn, when your signal can be seen from your vessel," said Norna, consigning the horses to the care of Pacolet, and leading the way into the wretched hovel, which she presently illuminated by lighting the small iron lamp which she usually carried along with her. "It is a poor," she said, "but a safe place of refuge; for were we pursued hither the earth would yawn and admit us into its recesses ere you were taken. For know, that this ground is sacred to the Gods of old Valhalla. And now say, man of mischief and of blood, are you friend or foe to Norna, the sole priestess of these disowned deities?"

"How is it possible for me to be your enemy?" said Cleveland. "Common gratitude——"

"Common gratitude," said Norna, interrupting him, "is a common word; and words are the common pay which fools accept at the hands of knaves; but Norna must be requited by actions, by sacrifices."

"Well, mother, name your request."

"That you never seek to see Minna Troil again, and that you leave this coast in twenty-four hours," answered Norna.

"It is impossible," said the outlaw; "I cannot be soon enough found in the sea-stores which the sloop must have."

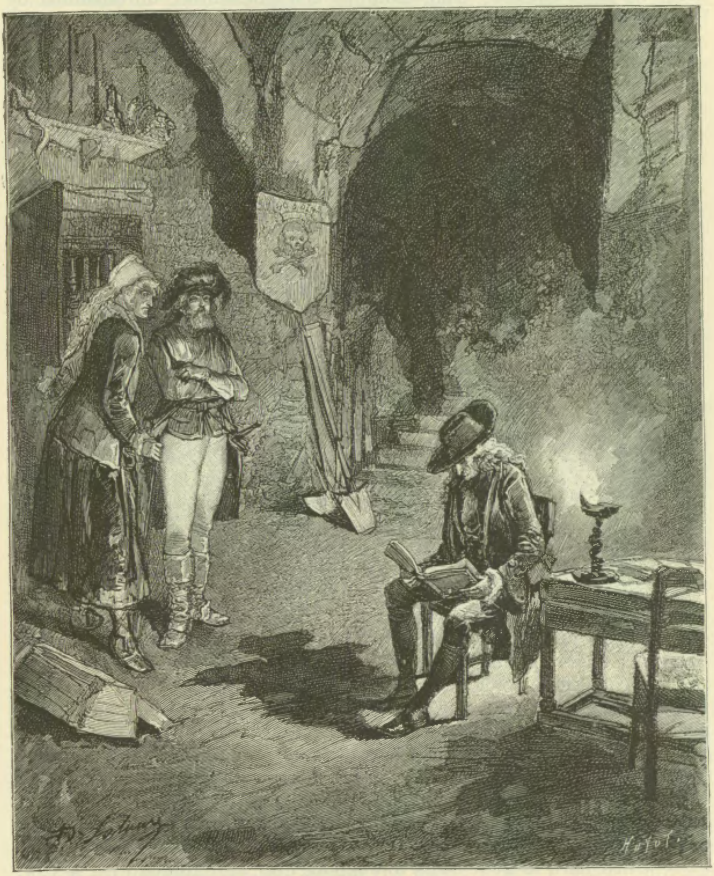
"You can. I will take care you are fully supplied; and Caithness and the Hebrides are not far distant; you can depart if you will."

"And why should I," said Cleveland, "if I will not?"

"Because your stay endangers others," said Norna, "and will prove your own destruction. Hear me with attention. From the first moment I saw you lying senseless on the sand beneath the cliffs of Sumburgh, I read that in your countenance which linked you with me, and those who were dear to me; but whether for good or evil was hidden from mine eyes. I aided in saving your life, in preserving your property. I aided in doing so the very youth whom you have crossed in his dearest affections—crossed by tale-bearing and slander."

"*I* slander Mertoun!" exclaimed Cleveland. "By Heaven! I scarce mentioned his name at Burgh Westra, if it is that which you mean. The peddling fellow Bryce, meaning, I believe, to be my friend, because he found something could be made by me, did, I have since heard, carry tattle, or truth, I know not which, to the old man, which was confirmed by the report of the whole island. But, for me, I scarce thought of him as a rival; else, I had taken a more honourable way to rid myself of him."

"Was the point of your double-edged knife, directed to the bosom of an unarmed man, intended to carve out that more honourable way?" said Norna sternly.



"An old man . . . in a rusty black coat and slouched hat, sat reading by a table" (p. 423).

Cleveland was conscience-struck, and remained silent for an instant, ere he replied, "There, indeed, I was wrong; but he is, I thank Heaven, recovered, and welcome to an honourable satisfaction."

"Cleveland," said the Pythoness, "no! The fiend who employs you as his implement is powerful; but with me he shall not strive. You are of that temperament which the dark Influences desire as the tools of their agency; bold, haughty and undaunted, unrestrained by principle, and having only in its room a wild sense of indomitable pride, which such men call honour. Such you are, and as such your course through life has been, onward and unrestrained, bloody and tempestuous. By me, however, it shall be controlled," she concluded, stretching out her staff, as if in the attitude of determined authority; "ay, even although the demon who presides over it should now arise in his terrors."

Cleveland laughed scornfully. "Good mother," he said, "reserve such language for the rude sailor that implores you to bestow him fair wind, or the poor fisherman that asks success to his nets and lines. I have been long inaccessible both to fear and to superstition. Call forth your demon, if you command one, and place him before me. The man that has spent years in company with incarnate devils can scarce dread the presence of a disembodied fiend."

This was said with a careless and desperate bitterness of spirit, which proved too powerfully energetic even for the delusions of Norna's insanity; and it was with a hollow and tremulous voice that she asked Cleveland, "For what, then, do you hold me, if you deny the power I have bought so dearly?"

"You have wisdom, mother," said Cleveland, "at least you have art, and art is power. I hold you for one who knows how to steer upon the current of events, but I deny your power to change its course. Do not, therefore, waste words in quoting terrors for which I have no feeling, but tell me at once, wherefore you would have me depart?"

"Because I will have you see Minna no more," answered Norna; "because Minna is the destined bride of him whom men call Mordaunt Mertoun; because if you depart not within twenty-four hours, utter destruction awaits you. In these plain words there is no metaphysical delusion; answer me as plainly."

"In as plain words, then," answered Cleveland, "I will *not* leave these islands—not, at least, till I have seen Minna Troil; and never shall your Mordaunt possess her while I live."

"Hear him!" said Norna; "hear a mortal man spurn at the means of prolonging his life! Hear a sinful—a most sinful—being refuse the time which fate yet affords for repentance, and for the salvation of an immortal soul! Behold him how he stands erect, bold and confident in his youthful strength and courage! My eyes, unused to tears—even my eyes, which have so little cause to weep for him, are blinded with sorrow, to think what so fair a form will be ere the second sunset!"

"Mother," said Cleveland firmly, yet with some touch of sorrow in his voice, "I in part understand your threats. You know more than we do of the course of the *Halcyon*—perhaps have the means (for I acknow-

ledge you have shown wonderful skill of combination in such affairs) of directing her cruise our way. Be it so; I will not depart from my purpose for that risk. If the frigate comes hither we have still our shoal water to trust to; and I think they will scarce cut us out with boats as if we were a Spanish xebeck. I am therefore resolved I will hoist once more the flag under which I have cruised, avail ourselves of the thousand chances which have helped us in greater odds, and, at the worst, fight the vessel to the very last; and, when mortal man can do no more, it is but snapping a pistol in the powder-room, and, as we have lived, so will we die."

There was a dead pause as Cleveland ended; and it was broken by

"The dumb dwarf waited with three horses, ensconced behind the wall of a deserted shed" (p. 423).

his resuming, in a softer tone, "You have heard my answer, mother; let us debate it no further, but part in peace. I would willingly leave you a remembrance, that you may not forget a poor fellow to whom your services have been useful, and who parts with you in no unkindness, however unfriendly you are to his dearest interests. Nay, do not shun to accept such a trifle," he said, forcing upon Norna the little silver enchased box which had been once the subject of strife betwixt Mertoun and him; "it is not for the sake of the metal, which I know you value not, but simply as a memorial that you have met him of whom many a strange tale will hereafter be told in the seas which he has traversed."

"I accept your gift," said Norna, "in token that, if I have in aught been accessary to your fate, it was as the involuntary and grieving agent

of other powers. Well did you say we direct not the current of the events which hurry us forward, and render our utmost efforts unavailing; even as the wells of Tuftiloe* can wheel the stoutest vessel round and round, in despite of either sail or steerage. Pacolet!" she exclaimed in a louder voice, "what, ho! Pacolet!"

A large stone, which lay at the side of the wall of the hovel, fell as she spoke, and to Cleveland's surprise, if not somewhat to his fear, the misshapen form of the dwarf was seen, like some overgrown reptile, extricating himself out of a subterranean passage, the entrance to which the stone had covered.

Norna, as if impressed by what Cleveland had said on the subject of her supernatural pretensions, was so far from endeavouring to avail herself of this opportunity to enforce them, that she hastened to explain the phenomenon he had witnessed.

"Such passages," she said, "to which the entrances are carefully concealed, are frequently found in these islands—the places of retreat of the ancient inhabitants, where they sought refuge from the rage of the Normans, the pirates of that day. It was that you might avail yourself of this, in case of need, that I brought you hither. Should you observe signs of pursuit, you may either lurk in the bowels of the earth until it has passed by, or escape, if you will, through the farther entrance near the lake, by which Pacolet entered but now. And now farewell! Think on what I have said; for as sure as you now move and breathe a living man, so surely is your doom fixed and sealed, unless, within four-and-twenty hours, you have doubled the Burgh Head."

"Farewell, mother!" said Cleveland, as she departed, bending a look upon him, in which, as he could perceive by the lamp, sorrow was mingled with displeasure.

The interview, which thus concluded, left a strong effect even upon the mind of Cleveland, accustomed as he was to imminent dangers and to hair-breadth escapes. He in vain attempted to shake off the impression left by the words of Norna, which he felt the more powerful because they were in a great measure divested of her wonted mystical tone, which he contemned. A thousand times he regretted that he had from time to time delayed the resolution, which he had long adopted, to quit his dreadful and dangerous trade; and as often he firmly determined, that, could he but see Minna Troil once more, were it but for a last farewell, he would leave the sloop, as soon as his comrades were extricated from their perilous situation, endeavour to obtain the benefit of the king's pardon, and distinguish himself, if possible, in some more honourable course of warfare.

This resolution, to which he again and again pledged himself, had

* A *well*, in the language of those seas, denotes one of the whirlpools, or circular eddies, which wheel and boil with astonishing strength, and are very dangerous. Hence the distinction, in old English, betwixt *wells* and *waves*, the latter signifying the direct onward course of the tide, and the former the smooth, glassy, oily-looking whirlpools, whose strength seems to the eye almost irresistible.

at length a sedative effect on his mental perturbation, and, wrapt in his cloak, he enjoyed, for a time, that imperfect repose which exhausted nature demands as her tribute, even from those who are situated on the verge of the most imminent danger. But how far soever the guilty may satisfy his own mind, and stupefy the feelings of remorse by such a conditional repentance, we may well question whether it is not, in the sight of Heaven, rather a presumptuous aggravation than an expiation of his sins.

When Cleveland awoke the grey dawn was already mingling with the twilight of an Orcadian night. He found himself on the verge of a beautiful sheet of water, which, close by the place where he had rested, was nearly divided by two tongues of land that approach each other from the opposing sides of the lake, and are in some degree united by the Bridge of Broisgar, a long causeway, containing openings to permit the flow and reflux of the tide. Behind him, and fronting to the bridge, stood that remarkable semi-circle of huge upright stones, which has no rival in Britain, excepting the inimitable monument at Stonehenge. These immense blocks of stone, all of them above twelve feet, and several being even fourteen or fifteen feet in height, stood around the pirate in the grey light of the dawning like the phantom forms of antediluvian giants, who, shrouded in the habiliments of the dead, came to revisit, by this pale light, the earth which they had plagued by their oppression and polluted by their sins, till they brought down upon it the vengeance of long-suffering Heaven.*

Cleveland was less interested by this singular monument of antiquity than by the distant view of Stromness, which he could as yet scarce discover. He lost no time in striking a light, by the assistance of one of his pistols, and some wet fern supplied him with fuel sufficient to make the appointed signal. It had been earnestly watched for on board the sloop; for Goffe's incapacity became daily more apparent; and even his most steady adherents agreed it would be best to submit to Cleveland's command till they got back to the West Indies.

Bunce, who came with the boat to bring off his favourite commander, danced, cursed, shouted, and spouted for joy, when he saw him once more at freedom. "They had already," he said, "made some progress in victualling the sloop, and they might have made more, but for that drunken old swab Goffe, who minded nothing but splicing the main-brace."

The boat's crew were inspired with the same enthusiasm, and rowed so hard that, although the tide was against them, and the air of wind failed, they soon placed Cleveland once more on the quarter-deck of the vessel which it was his misfortune to command.

The first exercise of the Captain's power was to make known to Magnus Troil that he was at full freedom to depart—that he was willing to make him any compensation in his power for the interruption of his

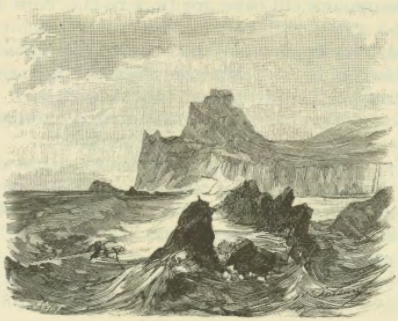
* Note XVII. The Standing Stones of Stennis.

voyage to Kirkwall; and that Captain Cleveland was desirous, if agreeable to Mr. Troil, to pay his respects to him on board his brig—thank him for former favours, and apologise for the circumstances attending his detention.

To Bunce, who, as the most civilised of the crew, Cleveland had intrusted this message, the old plain-dealing Udaller made the following answer: "Tell your Captain that I should be glad to think he had never stopped any one upon the high sea, save such as have suffered as little as I have. Say, too, that if we are to continue friends, we shall be most so at a distance; for I like the sound of his cannon-balls as little by sea as he would like the whistle of a bullet by land from my rifle-gun. Say, in a word, that I am sorry I was mistaken in him, and that he would have done better to have reserved for the Spaniard the usage he is bestowing on his countrymen."

"And so that is your message, old Snapcholerick?" said Bunce. "Now, stap my vitals if I have not a mind to do your errand for you over the left shoulder, and teach you more respect for gentlemen of fortune! but I won't, and chiefly for the sake of your two pretty wenches, not to mention my old friend Claud Halcro, the very visage of whom brought back all the old days of scene-shifting and candle-snuffing. So good-morrow to you, Gaffer Seal's-cap, and all is said that need pass between us."

No sooner did the boat put off with the pirates, who left the brig and now returned to their own vessel, than Magnus, in order to avoid reposing unnecessary confidence in the honour of these gentlemen of fortune, as they called themselves, got his brig under way; and, the wind coming favourably round, and increasing as the sun rose, he crowded all sail for Scalpa-flow, intending there to disembark and go by land to Kirkwall, where he expected to meet his daughters and his friend Claud Halcro.



CHAPTER XXXIX.

"Now, Emma, now the last reflection make,
What thou wouldst follow, what thou must forsake.
By our ill-omen'd stars and adverse Heaven,
No middle object to thy choice is given."

Henry and Emma.

THE sun was high in heaven; the boats were busily fetching off from the shore the promised supply of provisions and water, which, as many fishing skiffs were employed in the service, were got on board with unexpected speed, and stowed away by the crew of the sloop with equal dispatch. All worked with good will; for all, save Cleveland himself, were weary of a coast where every moment increased their danger, and where, which they esteemed a worse misfortune, there was no booty to be won. Bunce and Derrick took the immediate direction of this duty, while Cleveland, walking the deck alone and in silence, only interfered from time to time, to give some order which circumstances required, and then relapsed into his own sad reflections.

There are two sorts of men whom situations of guilt, terror, and commotion bring forward as prominent agents. The first are spirits so naturally moulded and fitted for deeds of horror that they stalk forth from their lurking-places like actual demons, to work in their native element, as the hideous apparition of the Bearded Man came forth at Versailles on the memorable 5th October, 1789, the delighted executioner of the victims delivered up to him by a bloodthirsty rabble. But Cleveland belonged to the second class of these unfortunate beings, who

are involved in evil rather by the concurrence of external circumstances than by natural inclination, being, indeed, one in whom his first engaging in this lawless mode of life, as the follower of his father, nay, perhaps, even his pursuing it as his father's avenger, carried with it something of mitigation and apology; one, also, who often considered his guilty situation with horror, and had made repeated, though ineffectual efforts, to escape from it.

Such thoughts of remorse were now rolling in his mind, and he may be forgiven if recollections of Minna mingled with and aided them. He looked around, too, on his mates, and, profligate and hardened as he knew them to be, he could not think of their paying the penalty of his obstinacy. "We shall be ready to sail with the ebb tide," he said to himself; "why should I endanger these men by detaining them till the hour of danger, predicted by that singular woman, shall arrive? Her intelligence, howsoever acquired, has been always strangely accurate; and her warning was as solemn as if a mother were to apprise an erring son of his crimes, and of his approaching punishment. Besides, what chance is there that I can again see Minna? She is at Kirkwall, doubtless, and to hold my course thither would be to steer right upon the rocks. No, I will not endanger these poor fellows; I will sail with the ebb tide. On the desolate Hebrides, or on the north-west coast of Ireland, I will leave the vessel, and return hither in some disguise; yet, why should I return, since it will perhaps be only to see Minna the bride of Mordaunt? No, let the vessel sail with this ebb tide without me. I will abide and take my fate."

His meditations were here interrupted by Jack Bunce, who, hailing him noble Captain, said they were ready to sail when he pleased.

"When *you* please, Bunce; for I shall leave the command with you, and go ashore at Stromness," said Cleveland.

"You shall do no such matter, by Heaven!" answered Bunce. "The command with me, truly! and how the devil am I to get the crew to obey *me*? Why, even Dick Fletcher rides rusty on me now and then. You know well enough that, without you, we shall be all at each other's throats in half an hour; and, if you desert us, what a rope's end does it signify whether we are destroyed by the king's cruisers, or by each other? Come, come, noble Captain, there are black-eyed girls enough in the world, but where will you find so tight a seaboat as the little *Favourite* here, manned as she is with a set of tearing lads,

> 'Fit to disturb the peace of all the world,
> And rule it when 'tis wildest'?"

"You are a precious fool, Jack Bunce," said Cleveland, half angry, and, in despite of himself, half diverted, by the false tones and exaggerated gesture of the stage-struck pirate.

"It may be so, noble Captain," answered Bunce, "and it may be that I have my comrades in my folly. Here are you, now, going to play

All for Love, and the World well Lost, and yet you cannot bear a harmless bounce in blank verse. Well, I can talk prose for the matter, for I have news enough to tell—and strange news, too—ay, and stirring news to boot."

"Well, prithee deliver them (to speak thy own cant) like a man of this world."

"The Stromness fishers will accept nothing for their provisions and trouble," said Bunce; "there is a wonder for you!"

"And for what reason, I pray?" said Cleveland. "It is the first time I have ever heard of cash being refused at a seaport."

"All worked with good will" (p. 431).

"True; they commonly lay the charges on as thick as if they were caulking. But here is the matter. The owner of the brig yonder, the father of your fair Imoinda, stands paymaster, by way of thanks for the civility with which we treated his daughters, and that we may not meet our due, as he calls it, on these shores."

"It is like the frank-hearted old Udaller!" said Cleveland; "but is he at Stromness? I thought he was to have crossed the island for Kirkwall."

"He did so purpose," said Bunce; "but more folks than King Duncan change the course of their voyage. He was no sooner ashore than he was met with by a meddling old witch of these parts, who has

her finger in every man's pie, and by her counsel he changed his purpose of going to Kirkwall, and lies at anchor for the present in yonder white house, that you may see with your glass up the lake yonder. I am told the old woman clubbed also to pay for the sloop's stores. Why she should shell out the boards I cannot conceive an idea, except that she is said to be a witch, and may befriend us as so many devils."

"But who told you all this?" said Cleveland, without using his spy-glass, or seeming so much interested in the news as his comrade had expected.

"Why," replied Bunce, "I made a trip ashore this morning to the village, and had a can with an old acquaintance, who had been sent by Master Troil to look after matters, and I fished it all out of him, and more, too, than I am desirous of telling you, noble Captain."

"And who is your intelligencer?" said Cleveland; "has he got no name?"

"Why, he is an old, fiddling, foppish acquaintance of mine, called Halcro, if you must know," said Bunce.

"Halcro!" echoed Cleveland, his eyes sparkling with surprise, "Claud Halcro? Why, he went ashore at Inganess with Minna and her sister. Where are they?"

"Why, that is just what I did not want to tell you," replied the confidant; "yet hang me if I can help it, for I cannot baulk a fine situation. That start had a fine effect, O ay, and the spy-glass is turned on the House of Stennis *now*! Well, yonder they are, it must be confessed,—indifferently well guarded, too. Some of the old witch's people are come over from that mountain of an island, Hoy, as they call it; and the old gentleman has got some fellows under arms himself. But what of all that, noble Captain? Give you but the word, and we snap up the wenches to-night, clap them under hatches, man the capstern by daybreak, up top sails, and sail with the morning tide."

"You sicken me with your villainy," said Cleveland, turning away from him.

"Umph! villainy, and sicken you!" said Bunce. "Now, pray, what have I said but what has been done a thousand times by gentlemen of fortune like ourselves?"

"Mention it not again," said Cleveland; then took a turn along the deck, in deep meditation, and, coming back to Bunce, took him by the hand, and said, "Jack, I will see her once more."

"With all my heart," said Bunce sullenly.

"Once more will I see her, and it may be to abjure at her feet this cursed trade, and expiate my offences——"

"At the gallows!" said Bunce, completing the sentence. "With all my heart! Confess and be hanged is a most reverend proverb."

"Nay, but, dear Jack!" said Cleveland.

"Dear Jack!" answered Bunce, in the same sullen tone; "a dear sight you have been to dear Jack. But hold your own course; I have

done with caring for you for ever; I should but sicken you with my villainous counsels."

"Now must I soothe this silly fellow as if he were a spoiled child," said Cleveland, speaking at Bunce, but not to him; "and yet he has sense enough, and bravery enough, too; and, one would think, kindness enough to know that men don't pick their words during a gale of wind."

"Why, that's true, Clement," said Bunce, "and there is my hand upon it. And, now I think upon't, you shall have your last interview,

"Why, that's true . . . and there is my hand upon it."

for it's out of my line to prevent a parting scene; and what signifies a tide? We can sail by to-morrow's ebb as well as by this."

Cleveland sighed, for Norna's prediction rushed on his mind; but the opportunity of a last meeting with Minna was too tempting to be resigned either for presentiment or prediction.

"I will go presently ashore to the place where they all are," said Bunce; "and the payment of these stores shall serve me for a pretext; and I will carry any letters or message from you to Minna with the dexterity of a *valet de chambre*."

"But they have armed men; you may be in danger," said Cleveland.

"Not a whit—not a whit," replied Bunce. "I protected the wenches when they were in my power; I warrant their father will neither wrong me, nor see me wronged."

"You say true," said Cleveland, "it is not in his nature. I will instantly write a note to Minna." And he ran down to the cabin for that purpose, where he wasted much paper, ere, with a trembling hand and throbbing heart, he achieved such a letter as he hoped might prevail on Minna to permit him a farewell meeting on the succeeding morning.

His adherent, Bunce, in the meanwhile, sought out Fletcher, of whose support to second any motion whatever he accounted himself perfectly sure; and, followed by this trusty satellite, he intruded himself on the awful presence of Hawkins the boatswain, and Derrick the quartermaster, who were regaling themselves with a can of rumbo, after the fatiguing duty of the day.

"Here comes he can tell us," said Derrick. "So, Master Lieutenant, for so we must call you now, I think, let us have a peep into your counsels. When will the anchor be a-trip?"

"When it pleases heaven, Master Quartermaster," answered Bunce; "for I know no more than the stern-post."

"Why, d—n my buttons," said Derrick, "do we not weigh this tide?"

"Or to-morrow's tide, at farthest?" said the Boatswain. "Why, what have we been slaving the whole company for, to get all these stores aboard?"

"Gentlemen," said Bunce, "you are to know that Cupid has laid our Captain on board, carried the vessel, and nailed down his wits under hatches."

"What sort of play-stuff is all this?" said the Boatswain gruffly. "If you have anything to tell us, say it in a word, like a man."

"Howsomdever," said Fletcher, "I always think Jack Bunce speaks like a man, and acts like a man too—and so, d'ye see——"

"Hold your peace, dear Dick, best of bullybacks, be silent," said Bunce. "Gentlemen, in one word, the Captain is in love."

"Why, now, only think of that!" said the Boatswain; "not but that I have been in love as often as any man, when the ship was laid up."

"Well, but," continued Bunce, "Captain Cleveland is in love. Yes, Prince Volscius is in love; and, though that's the cue for laughing on the stage, it is no laughing matter here. He expects to meet the girl to-morrow for the last time; and that, we all know, leads to another meeting, and another, and so on till the *Halcyon* is down on us, and we may look for more kicks than halfpence."

"By ——," said the Boatswain, with a sounding oath, "we'll have a mutiny, and not allow him to go ashore—eh, Derrick?"

"And the best way, too," said Derrick.

"What d'ye think of it, Jack Bunce?" said Fletcher, in whose ears

this counsel sounded very sagely, but who still bent a wistful look upon his companion.

"Why, look ye, gentlemen," said Bunce, "I will mutiny none, and stap my vitals if any of you shall!"

"Why, then I won't, for one," said Fletcher; "but what are we to do, since howsomdever——"

"Stopper your jaw, Dick, will you?" said Bunce. "Now, Boatswain, I am partly of your mind, that the Captain must be brought to reason by a little wholesome force. But you all know he has the spirit of a lion, and will do nothing unless he is allowed to hold on his own course. Well, I'll go ashore and make this appointment. The girl comes to the rendezvous in the morning, and the Captain goes ashore—we take a good boat's crew with us, to row against tide and current, and we will be ready, at the signal, to jump ashore to bring off the Captain and the girl, whether they will or no. The pet-child will not quarrel with us, since we bring off his whirligig along with him; and if he is still fractious, why, we will weigh anchor without his orders, and let him come to his senses at leisure, and know his friends another time."

"Why, this has a face with it, Master Derrick," said Hawkins.

"Jack Bunce is always right," said Fletcher; "howsomdever, the Captain will shoot some of us, that is certain."

"Hold your jaw, Dick," said Bunce; "pray, who the devil cares, do you think, whether you are shot or hanged?"

"Why, it don't much argufy for the matter of that," replied Dick; "howsomdever——"

"Be quiet, I tell you," said his inexorable patron, "and hear me out. We will take him at unawares, so that he shall neither have time to use cutlass nor pops; and I myself, for the dear love I bear him, will be the first to lay him on his back. There is a nice tight-going bit of a pinnace, that is a consort of this chase of the Captain's; if I have an opportunity, I'll snap her up on my own account."

"Yes, yes," said Derrick, "let you alone for keeping on the look-out for your own comforts."

"Faith, nay," said Bunce, "I only snatch at them when they come fairly in my way, or are purchased by dint of my own wit; and none of you could have fallen on such a plan as this. We shall have the Captain with us, head, hand, and heart, and all, besides making a scene fit to finish a comedy. So I will go ashore to make the appointment, and do you possess some of the gentlemen who are still sober, and fit to be trusted, with the knowledge of our intentions."

Bunce, with his friend Fletcher, departed accordingly, and the two veteran pirates remained looking at each other in silence, until the Boatswain spoke at last. "Blow me, Derrick, if I like these two daffadandilly young fellows; they are not the true breed. Why, they are no more like the rovers I have known than this sloop is to a first-rate. Why, there was old Sharpe that read prayers to his ship's company

every Sunday, what would he have said to have heard it proposed to bring two wenches on board?"

"And what would tough old Black Beard have said," answered his companion, "if they had expected to keep them to themselves? They deserve to be made to walk the plank for their impudence, or to be tied back to back and set a-diving; and I care not how soon."

"Ay, but who is to command the ship, then?" said Hawkins.

"Why, what ails you at old Goffe?" answered Derrick.

"Why, he has sucked the monkey so long and so often," said the Boatswain, "that the best of him is buffed. He is little better than an old woman when he is sober, and he is roaring mad when he is drunk. We have had enough of Goffe."

"Why, then, what d'ye say to yourself, or to me, Boatswain?" demanded the Quartermaster. "I am content to toss up for it."

"Rot it, no," answered the Boatswain, after a moment's consideration; "if we were within reach of the trade-winds we might either of us make a shift; but it will take all Cleveland's navigation to get us there; and so, I think, there is nothing like Bunce's project for the present. Hark, he calls for the boat. I must go on deck and have her lowered for his honour, d—n his eyes!"

The boat was lowered accordingly, made its voyage up the lake with safety, and landed Bunce within a few hundred yards of the old mansion-house of Stennis. Upon arriving in front of the house, he found that hasty measures had been taken to put it in a state of defence, the lower windows being barricaded, with places left for use of musketry, and a ship-gun being placed so as to command the entrance, which was besides guarded by two sentinels. Bunce demanded admission at the gate, which was briefly and unceremoniously refused, with an exhortation to him, at the same time, to be gone about his business before worse came of it. As he continued, however, importunately to insist on seeing some one of the family, and stated his business to be of the most urgent nature, Claud Halcro at length appeared, and, with more peevishness than belonged to his usual manner, that admirer of glorious John expostulated with his old acquaintance upon his pertinacious folly.

"You are," he said, "like foolish moths fluttering about a candle, which is sure at last to consume you."

"And you," said Bunce, "are a set of stingless drones whom we can smoke out of your defences at our pleasure, with half a dozen of hand-grenades."

"Smoke a fool's head!" said Halcro. "Take my advice, and mind your own matters, or there will be those upon you will smoke you to purpose. Either begone, or tell me in two words what you want; for you are like to receive no welcome here save from a blunderbuss. We are men enough of ourselves; and here is young Mordaunt Mertoun come from Hoy, whom your Captain so nearly murdered."

"Tush, man," said Bunce, "he did but let out a little malapert blood."

"We want no such phlebotomy here," said Claud Halcro; "and, besides, your patient turns out to be nearer allied to us than either you or we thought of; so you may think how little welcome the Captain or any of his crew are like to be here."

"Well; but what if I bring money for the stores sent on board?"

"Keep it till it is asked of you," said Halcro. "There are two bad paymasters; he that pays too soon, and he that does not pay at all."

"Well, then, let me at least give our thanks to the donor," said Bunce.

"Keep them, too, till they are asked for," answered the poet.

"So this is all the welcome I have of you for old acquaintance' sake?" said Bunce.

"Why, what can I do for you, Master Altamont?" said Halcro, somewhat moved. "If young Mordaunt had had his own will he would have welcomed you with 'the red Burgundy, Number a thousand.' For God's sake begone, else the stage direction will be, Enter guard, and seize Altamont."

"'Farewell, then, old boy, for ever and a day!'" said Bunce (p. 440).

"I will not give you the trouble," said Bunce, "but will make my exit instantly. Stay a moment; I had almost forgot that I have a slip of paper for the tallest of your girls there; Minna, ay, Minna is her

name. It is a farewell from Captain Cleveland. You cannot refuse to give it her?"

"Ah, poor fellow!" said Halcro, "I comprehend—I comprehend. Farewell, fair Armida.

> ''Mid pikes and 'mid bullets, 'mid tempests and fire,
> The danger is less than in hopeless desire!'

Tell me but this—is there poetry in it?"

"Chokeful to the seal, with song, sonnet, and elegy," answered Bunce; "but let her have it cautiously and secretly."

"Tush, man! Teach me to deliver a billet-doux!—me, who have been in the Wits' Coffee-house, and have seen all the toasts of the Kit-Cat Club! Minna shall have it, then, for old acquaintance' sake, Mr. Altamont, and for your Captain's sake, too, who has less of the core of devil about him than his trade requires. There can be no harm in a farewell letter."

"Farewell, then, old boy, for ever and a day!" said Bunce; and, seizing the poet's hand, gave it so hearty a gripe, that he left him roaring, and shaking his fist, like a dog when a hot cinder has fallen on his foot.

Leaving the rover to return on board the vessel, we remain with the family of Magnus Troil, assembled at their kinsman's mansion of Stennis, where they maintained a constant and careful watch against surprise.

Mordaunt Mertoun had been received with much kindness by Magnus Troil, when he came to his assistance, with a small party of Norna's dependants, placed by her under his command. The Udaller was easily satisfied that the reports instilled into his ears by the Jagger, zealous to augment his favour towards his more profitable customer Cleveland, by diminishing that of Mertoun, were without foundation. They had, indeed, been confirmed by the good Lady Glowrowrum, and by common fame, both of whom were pleased to represent Mordaunt Mertoun as an arrogant pretender to the favour of the sisters of Burgh-Westra, who only hesitated, sultan-like, on whom he should bestow the handkerchief. But common fame, Magnus considered, was a common liar, and he was sometimes disposed (where scandal was concerned) to regard the good Lady Glowrowrum as rather an uncommon specimen of the same genus. He therefore received Mordaunt once more into full favour, listened with much surprise to the claim which Norna laid to the young man's duty, and with no less interest to her intention of surrendering to him the considerable property which she had inherited from her father. Nay, it is even probable that, though he gave no immediate answer to her hints concerning an union betwixt his eldest daughter and her heir, he might think such an alliance recommended, as well by the young man's personal merits, as by the chance it gave of reuniting the very large estate which had been divided betwixt his own

father and that of Norna. At all events, the Udaller received his young friend with much kindness, and he and the proprietor of the mansion joined in intrusting to him, as the youngest and most active of the party, the charge of commanding the night-watch, and relieving the sentinels around the House of Stennis.

CHAPTER XL.

"Of an outlawe, this is the lawe—
That men him take and bind,
Without pitie hang'd to be,
And waive with the wind."
The Ballad of the Nut Brown Maid.

MORDAUNT had caused the sentinels who had been on duty since midnight to be relieved ere the peep of day, and having given directions that the guard should be again changed at sunrise, he had retired to a small parlour, and, placing his arms beside him, was slumbering in an easy-chair, when he felt himself pulled by the watch-cloak in which he was enveloped.

"Is it sunrise," said he, "already?" as, starting up, he discovered the first beams lying level upon the horizon.

"Mordaunt!" said a voice, every note of which thrilled to his heart.

He turned his eyes on the speaker, and Brenda Troil, to his joyful astonishment, stood before him. As he was about to address her eagerly, he was checked by observing the signs of sorrow and discomposure in her pale cheeks, trembling lips, and brimful eyes.

"Mordaunt," she said, "you must do Minna and me a favour; you must allow us to leave the house quietly, and without alarming any one, in order to go as far as the Standing Stones of Stennis."

"What freak can this be, dearest Brenda?" said Mordaunt, much amazed at the request; "some Orcadian observance of superstition,

perhaps; but the time is too dangerous, and my charge from your father too strict, that I should permit you to pass without his consent. Consider, dearest Brenda, I am a soldier on duty, and must obey orders."

"Mordaunt," said Brenda, "this is no jesting matter. Minna's reason, nay, Minna's life, depends on your giving us this permission."

"And for what purpose?" said Mordaunt. "Let me at least know that."

"For a wild and a desperate purpose," replied Brenda. "It is that she may meet Cleveland."

"Cleveland!" said Mordaunt. "Should the villain come ashore, he shall be welcomed with a shower of rifle-balls. Let me within a hundred yards of him," he added, grasping his piece, "and all the mischief he has done me shall be balanced with an ounce bullet!"

"His death will drive Minna frantic," said Brenda; "and him who injures Minna Brenda will never again look upon."

"This is madness—raving madness!" said Mordaunt. "Consider your honour; consider your duty."

"I can consider nothing but Minna's danger," said Brenda, breaking into a flood of tears. "Her former illness was nothing to the state she has been in all night. She holds in her hand his letter, written in characters of fire, rather than of ink, imploring her to see him, for a last farewell, as she would save a mortal body and an immortal soul; pledging himself for her safety; and declaring no power shall force him from the coast till he has seen her. You *must* let us pass."

"It is impossible!" replied Mordaunt, in great perplexity. "This ruffian has imprecations enough, doubtless, at his fingers' ends; but what better pledge has he to offer? I cannot permit Minna to go."

"I suppose," said Brenda, somewhat reproachfully, while she dried her tears, yet still continued sobbing, "that there is something in what Norna spoke of betwixt Minna and you; and that you are too jealous of this poor wretch to allow him even to speak with her an instant before his departure."

"You are unjust," said Mordaunt, hurt, and yet somewhat flattered by her suspicions; "you are as unjust as you are imprudent. You know—you cannot but know—that Minna is chiefly dear to me as *your* sister. Tell me, Brenda—and tell me truly—if I aid you in this folly, have you no suspicion of the Pirate's faith?"

"No, none," said Brenda; "if I had any, do you think I would urge you thus? He is wild and unhappy, but I think we may in this trust him."

"Is the appointed place the Standing Stones, and the time day-break?" again demanded Mordaunt.

"It is, and the time is come," said Brenda. "For Heaven's sake let us depart!"

"I will myself," said Mordaunt, "relieve the sentinel at the front

door for a few minutes, and suffer you to pass. You will not protract this interview, so full of danger?"

"We will not," said Brenda; "and you, on your part, will not avail yourself of this unhappy man's venturing hither to harm or to seize him?"

"Rely on my honour," said Mordaunt. "He shall have no harm, unless he offers any."

"Then I go to call my sister," said Brenda, and quickly left the apartment.

Mordaunt considered the matter for an instant, and then going to the sentinel at the front door, he desired him to run instantly to the main-guard, and order the whole to turn out with their arms—to see the order obeyed, and to return when they were in readiness. Meantime, he himself, he said, would remain upon the post.

During the interval of the sentinel's absence the front door was slowly opened, and Minna and Brenda appeared, muffled in their mantles. The former leaned on her sister, and kept her face bent on the ground, as one who felt ashamed of the step she was about to take. Brenda also passed her lover in silence, but threw back upon him a look of gratitude and affection, which doubled, if possible, his anxiety for their safety.

The sisters, in the meanwhile, passed out of sight of the house; when Minna, whose step, till that time, had been faint and feeble, began to erect her person, and to walk with a pace so firm and so swift, that Brenda, who had some difficulty to keep up with her, could not forbear remonstrating on the imprudence of hurrying her spirits and exhausting her force by such unnecessary haste.

"Fear not, my dearest sister," said Minna; "the spirit which I now feel will, and must, sustain me through the dreadful interview. I could not but move with a drooping head and dejected pace while I was in view of one who must necessarily deem me deserving of his pity or his scorn. But you know, my dearest Brenda, and Mordaunt shall also know, that the love I bore to that unhappy man was as pure as the rays of that sun that is now reflected on the waves. And I dare attest that glorious sun, and yonder blue heaven, to bear me witness, that, but to urge him to change his unhappy course of life, I had not, for all the temptations this round world holds, ever consented to see him more."

As she spoke thus, in a tone which afforded much confidence to Brenda, the sisters attained the summit of a rising ground, whence they commanded a full view of the Orcadian Stonehenge, consisting of a huge circle and semicircle of the Standing Stones, as they are called, which already glimmered a greyish-white in the rising sun, and projected far to the westward their long gigantic shadows. At another time the scene would have operated powerfully on the imaginative mind of Minna, and interested the curiosity at least of her less sensitive sister. But at this moment neither was at leisure to receive the impressions

which this stupendous monument of antiquity is so well calculated to impress on the feelings of those who behold it; for they saw in the lower lake, beneath what is termed the Bridge of Broisgar, a boat well manned and armed, which had disembarked one of its crew, who advanced alone, and wrapped in a naval cloak, towards that monumental circle which they themselves were about to reach from another quarter.

"They are many, and they are armed," said the startled Brenda, in a whisper to her sister.

"It is for precaution's sake," answered Minna, "which, alas! their condition renders but too necessary. Fear no treachery from him—that, at least, is not his vice."

As she spoke, or shortly afterwards, she attained the centre of the circle, on which, in the midst of the tall erect pillars of rude stone that are raised around, lies one flat and prostrate, supported by short stone pillars, of which some relics are still visible, that had once served, perhaps, the purpose of an altar.

"Here," she said, "in heathen times (if we may believe legends, which have cost me but too dear) our ancestors offered sacrifices to heathen deities; and here will I, from my soul, renounce, abjure, and offer up to a better and a more merciful God than was known to them, the vain ideas with which my youthful imagination has been seduced."

She stood by the prostrate table of stone, and saw Cleveland advance towards her, with a timid pace and a downcast look, as different from his usual character and bearing as Minna's high air and lofty demeanour, and calm, contemplative posture, were distant from those of the love-lorn and broken-hearted maiden, whose weight had almost borne down the support of her sister as she left the House of Stennis. If the belief of those is true, who assign these singular monuments exclusively to the Druids, Minna might have seemed the Haxa, or high priestess of the order, from whom some champion of the tribe expected inauguration. Or, if we hold the circles of Gothic and Scandinavian origin, she might have seemed a descended Vision of Freya, the spouse of the Thundering Deity, before whom some bold Sea-King or champion bent with an awe which no mere mortal terror could have inflicted upon him. Brenda, overwhelmed with inexpressible fear and doubt, remained a pace or two behind, anxiously observing the motions of Cleveland, and attending to nothing around, save to him and to her sister.

Cleveland approached within two yards of Minna, and bent his head to the ground. There was a dead pause, until Minna said, in a firm but melancholy tone, "Unhappy man, why didst thou seek this aggravation of our woe? Depart in peace, and may Heaven direct thee to a better course than that which thy life has yet held?"

"Heaven will not aid me," said Cleveland, "excepting by your voice. I came hither rude and wild, scarce knowing that my trade, my desperate trade, was more criminal in the sight of man or of Heaven,

than that of those privateers whom your law acknowledges. I was bred in it, and, but for the wishes you have encouraged me to form, I should have perhaps died in it, desperate and impenitent. Oh, do not throw me from you! let me do something to redeem what I have done amiss, and do not leave your own work half-finished!"

"Cleveland," said Minna, "I will not reproach you with abusing my inexperience, or with availing yourself of those delusions which the credulity of early youth had flung around me, and which led me to confound your fatal course of life with the deeds of our ancient heroes. Alas! when I saw your followers, that illusion was no more. But I do not upbraid you with its having existed. Go, Cleveland; detach yourself from those miserable wretches with whom you are associated, and believe me, that if Heaven yet grants you the means of distinguishing your name by one good or glorious action, there are eyes left in these lonely islands that will weep as much for joy, as—as—they must now do for sorrow."

"And is this all?" said Cleveland; "and may I not hope that if I extricate myself from my present associates, if I can gain my pardon by being as bold in the right as I have been too often in the wrong cause, if, after a term, I care not how long, but still a term which may have an end, I can boast of having redeemed my fame—may I not—may I not hope that Minna may forgive what my God and my country shall have pardoned?"

"Never, Cleveland, never!" said Minna, with the utmost firmness. "On this spot we part, and part for ever, and part without longer indulgence. Think of me as of one dead if you continue as you now are; but if—which may Heaven grant—you change your fatal course, think of me then as one whose morning and evening prayers will be for your happiness, though she has lost her own. Farewell, Cleveland!"

He kneeled, overpowered by his own bitter feelings, to take the hand which she held out to him, and in that instant his confidant Bunce, starting from behind one of the large upright pillars, his eyes wet with tears, exclaimed,—

"Never saw such a parting scene on any stage! But I'll be d—d if you make your exit as you expect!"

And so saying, ere Cleveland could employ either remonstrance or resistance, and indeed before he could get upon his feet, he easily secured him by pulling him down on his back, so that two or three of the boat's crew seized him by the arms and legs, and began to hurry him towards the lake. Minna and Brenda shrieked, and attempted to fly; but Derrick snatched up the former with as much ease as a falcon pounces on a pigeon, while Bunce, with an oath or two which were intended to be of a consolatory nature, seized on Brenda; and the whole party, with two or three of the other pirates, who, stealing from the water-side, had accompanied them on the ambuscade, began hastily to run towards the boat, which was left in charge of two of their number.

"Cleveland . . . snatched her from the ruffian with one hand, and with the other shot him dead on the spot" (p. 449).

Their course, however, was unexpectedly interrupted, and their criminal purpose entirely frustrated.

When Mordaunt Mertoun had turned out his guard in arms it was with the natural purpose of watching over the safety of the two sisters. They had accordingly closely observed the motions of the pirates, and when they saw so many of them leave the boat and steal towards the place of rendezvous assigned to Cleveland, they naturally suspected treachery, and by cover of an old hollow way or trench, which perhaps had anciently been connected with the monumental circle, they had thrown themselves unperceived between the pirates and their boat. At the cries of the sisters they started up, and placed themselves in the way of the ruffians, presenting their pieces, which, notwithstanding, they dared not fire, for fear of hurting the young ladies, secured as they were in the rude grasp of the marauders. Mordaunt, however, advanced with the speed of a wild deer on Bunce, who, loath to quit his prey, yet unable to defend himself otherwise, turned to this side and that alternately, exposing Brenda to the blows which Mordaunt offered at him. This defence, however, proved in vain against a youth possessed of the lightest foot and most active hand ever known in Zetland, and after a feint or two Mordaunt brought the pirate to the ground with a stroke from the butt of the carabine, which he dared not use otherwise. At the same time firearms were discharged on either side by those who were liable to no such cause of forbearance, and the pirates who had hold of Cleveland dropped him, naturally enough, to provide for their own defence or retreat. But they only added to the numbers of their enemies; for Cleveland perceiving Minna in the arms of Derrick, snatched her from the ruffian with one hand, and with the other shot him dead on the spot. Two or three more of the pirates fell or were taken, the rest fled to their boat, pushed off, then turned their broadside to the shore, and fired repeatedly on the Orcadian party, which they returned, with little injury on either side. Meanwhile Mordaunt, having first seen that the sisters were at liberty and in full flight towards the house, advanced on Cleveland with his cutlass drawn. The pirate presented a pistol, and calling out at the same time, "Mordaunt, I never missed my aim," he fired into the air, and threw it into the lake; then drew his cutlass, brandished it round his head, and flung that also as far as his arm could send it, in the same direction. Yet such was the universal belief of his personal strength and resources, that Mordaunt still used precaution, as, advancing on Cleveland, he asked him if he surrendered.

"I surrender to no man," said the Pirate Captain; "but you may see I have thrown away my weapons."

He was immediately seized by some of the Orcadians without his offering any resistance; but the instant interference of Mordaunt prevented his being roughly treated, or bound. The victors conducted him to a well-secured upper apartment in the House of Stennis, and

placed a sentinel at the door. Bunce and Fletcher, both of whom had been stretched on the field during the skirmish, were lodged in the same chamber; and two prisoners, who appeared of lower rank, were confined in a vault belonging to the mansion.

Without pretending to describe the joy of Magnus Troil, who, when awakened by the noise and firing, found his daughters safe and his enemy a prisoner, we shall only say it was so great, that he forgot, for the time at least, to inquire what circumstances were those which had placed them in danger; that he hugged Mordaunt to his breast a thousand times, as their preserver; and swore as often by the bones of his sainted namesake that, if he had a thousand daughters, so tight a lad, and so true a friend, should have the choice of them, let Lady Glowrowrum say what she would.

A very different scene was passing in the prison-chamber of the unfortunate Cleveland and his associates. The Captain sat by the window, his eyes bent on the prospect of the sea which it presented, and was seemingly so intent on it as to be insensible of the presence of the others. Jack Bunce stood meditating some ends of verse, in order to make his advances towards a reconciliation with Cleveland; for he began to be sensible, from the consequences, that the part he had played towards his Captain, however well intended, was neither lucky in its issue nor likely to be well taken. His admirer and adherent Fletcher lay half asleep, as it seemed, on a truckle-bed in the room, without the least attempt to interfere in the conversation which ensued.

"Nay, but speak to me, Clement," said the penitent Lieutenant, "if it be but to swear at me for my stupidity!

> 'What! not an oath? Nay, then the world goes hard,
> If Clifford cannot spare his friends an oath.'"

"I prithee peace, and be gone!" said Cleveland. "I have one bosom friend left yet, and you will make me bestow its contents on you, or on myself."

"I have it!" said Bunce, "I have it!" and on he went in the vein of Jaffier—

> "'Then by the hell I merit, I'll not leave thee,
> Till to thyself at least thou'rt reconciled,
> However thy resentment deal with me!'"

"I pray you once more to be silent," said Cleveland. "Is it not enough that you have undone me with your treachery, but you must stun me with your silly buffoonery? I would not have believed *you* would have lifted a finger against me, Jack, of any man or devil in yonder unhappy ship."

"Who, I?" exclaimed Bunce, "I lift a finger against you! and if I did, it was in pure love, and to make you the happiest fellow that ever trode a deck, with your mistress beside you, and fifty fine fellows at your command. Here is Dick Fletcher can bear witness I did all for

the best, if he would but speak, instead of lolloping there like a Dutch dogger laid up to be careened. Get up, Dick, and speak for me, won't you?"

"Why, yes, Jack Bunce," answered Fletcher, raising himself with difficulty, and speaking feebly, "I will if I can; and I always knew you spoke and did for the best; but howsomdever, d'ye see, it has turned out for the worst for me this time, for I am bleeding to death, I think."

"You cannot be such an ass!" said Jack Bunce, springing to his assistance, as did Cleveland. But human aid came too late. He sunk back on the bed, and, turning on his face, expired without a groan.

"I always thought him a d—d fool," said Bunce, as he wiped a tear from his eye, "but never such a consummate idiot as to hop the perch

"'Why, I can't make her well out,' said Bunce" (p. 452).

so sillily. I have lost the best follower——" and he again wiped his eye.

Cleveland looked on the dead body, the rugged features of which had remained unaltered by the death-pang. "A bull-dog," he said, "of the true British breed, and, with a better counsellor, would have been a better man."

"You may say that of some other folks, too, Captain, if you are minded to do them justice," said Bunce.

"I may indeed, and especially of yourself," said Cleveland, in reply.

"Why then, say, *Jack, I forgive you*," said Bunce; "it's but a short word, and soon spoken."

"I forgive you from all my soul, Jack," said Cleveland, who had resumed his situation at the window; "and the rather that your folly is

of little consequence. The morning is come that must bring ruin on us all."

"What! you are thinking of the old woman's prophecy you spoke of?" said Bunce.

"It will soon be accomplished," answered Cleveland. "Come hither. What do you take yon large square-rigged vessel for, that you see doubling the headland on the east, and opening the Bay of Stromness?"

"Why, I can't make her well out," said Bunce, "but yonder is old Goffe takes her for a West Indiaman loaded with rum and sugar, I suppose, for d—n me if he does not slip cable, and stand out to her!"

"Instead of running into the shoal-water, which was his only safety," said Cleveland. "The fool! the dotard! the drivelling, drunken idiot! he will get his flip hot enough; for yon is the *Halcyon*. See, she hoists her colours and fires a broadside! and there will soon be an end of the *Fortune's Favourite*! I only hope they will fight her to the last plank. The Boatswain used to be stanch enough, and so is Goffe, though an incarnate demon. Now she shoots away, with all the sail she can spread, and that shows some sense."

"Up goes the Jolly Hodge, the old black flag, with the death's head and hour-glass, and that shows some spunk," added his comrade.

"The hour-glass is turned for us, Jack, for this bout; our sand is running fast. Fire away yet, my roving lads! The deep sea or the blue sky, rather than a rope and a yardarm!"

There was a moment of anxious and dead silence, the sloop, though hard pressed, maintaining still a running fight, and the frigate continuing in full chase, but scarce returning a shot. At length the vessels neared each other, so as to show that the man-of-war intended to board the sloop, instead of sinking her, probably to secure the plunder which might be in the pirate vessel.

"Now, Goffe—now, Boatswain!" exclaimed Cleveland, in an ecstasy of impatience, and as if they could have heard his commands, "stand by sheets and tacks, rake her with a broadside, when you are under her bows, then about ship, and go off on the other tack like a wild goose. The sails shiver—the helm's a-lee! Ah!—deep-sea sink the lubbers! They miss stays, and the frigate runs them aboard!"

Accordingly, the various manœuvres of the chase had brought them so near, that Cleveland, with his spy-glass, could see the man-of-war's men boarding by the yards and bowsprit, in irresistible numbers, their naked cutlasses flashing in the sun, when, at that critical moment, both ships were enveloped in a cloud of thick black smoke, which suddenly arose on board the captured pirate.

"*Exeunt omnes*!" said Bunce, with clasped hands.

"There went the *Fortune's Favourite*, ship and crew!" said Cleveland, at the same instant.

But the smoke immediately clearing away, showed that the damage

had only been partial, and that, from want of a sufficient quantity of powder, the pirates had failed in their desperate attempt to blow up their vessel with the *Halcyon.*

Shortly after the action was over, Captain Weatherport, of the *Halcyon,* sent an officer and a party of marines to the House of Stennis, to demand from the little garrison the pirate seamen who were their prisoners, and, in particular, Cleveland and Bunce, who acted as Captain and Lieutenant of the gang.

This was a demand which was not to be resisted, though Magnus Troil could have wished sincerely that the roof under which he lived had been allowed as an asylum at least to Cleveland. But the officer's orders were peremptory; and he added, it was Captain Weatherport's intention to land the other prisoners, and send the whole, with a sufficient escort, across the island to Kirkwall, in order to undergo an examination there before the civil authorities, previous to their being sent off to London for trial at the High Court of Admiralty. Magnus could therefore only intercede for good usage to Cleveland, and that he might not be stripped or plundered, which the officer, struck by his good mien, and compassionating his situation, readily promised. The honest Udaller would have said something in the way of comfort to Cleveland himself, but he could not find words to express it, and only shook his head.

"Old friend," said Cleveland, "you may have much to complain of, yet you pity instead of exulting over me. For the sake of you and yours, I will never harm human being more. Take this from me—my last hope, but my last temptation also. He drew from his bosom a pocket-pistol, and gave it to Magnus Troil. "Remember me to—— But no—let every one forget me. I am your prisoner, sir," said he to the officer.

"And I also," said poor Bunce; and putting on a theatrical countenance, he ranted, with no very perceptible faltering in his tone, the words of Pierre,—

> "'Captain, you should be a gentleman of honour;
> Keep off the rabble, that I may have room
> To entertain my fate, and die with decency.'"

CHAPTER XLI.

"Joy, joy, in London now!"

SOUTHEY.

THE news of the capture of the Rover reached Kirkwall about an hour before noon, and filled all men with wonder and with joy. Little business was that day done at the Fair, whilst people of all ages and occupations streamed from the place to see the prisoners as they were marched towards Kirkwall, and to triumph in the different appearance which they now bore from that which they had formerly exhibited when ranting, swaggering, and bullying in the streets of that town. The bayonets of the marines were soon seen to glisten in the sun, and then came on the melancholy troop of captives, handcuffed two and two together. Their finery had been partly torn from them by their captors, partly hung in rags about them; many were wounded and covered with blood, many blackened and scorched with the explosion, by which a few of the most desperate had in vain striven to blow up the vessel. Most of them seemed sullen and impenitent, some were more becomingly affected with their condition, and a few braved it out, and sung the same ribald songs to which they had made the streets of Kirkwall ring when they were in their frolics.

The Boatswain and Goffe, coupled together, exhausted themselves in threats and imprecations against each other; the former charging Goffe with want of seamanship, and the latter alleging that the Boatswain had prevented him from firing the powder that was stowed

forward, and so sending them all to the other world together. Last came Cleveland and Bunce, who were permitted to walk unshackled; the decent melancholy, yet resolved manner of the former, contrasting strongly with the stage strut and swagger which poor Jack thought it fitting to assume, in order to conceal some less dignified emotions. The former was looked upon with compassion, the latter with a mixture of scorn and pity; while most of the others inspired horror, and even fear, by their looks and their language.

There was one individual in Kirkwall, who was so far from hastening to see the sight which attracted all eyes, that he was not even aware of

"Last came Cleveland and Bunce, who were permitted to walk unshackled."

the event which agitated the town. This was the elder Mertoun, whose residence Kirkwall had been for two or three days, part of which had been spent in attending to some judicial proceedings, undertaken at the instance of the Procurator Fiscal, against that grave professor, Bryce Snailsfoot. In consequence of an inquisition into the proceedings of this worthy trader, Cleveland's chest, with his papers and other matters therein contained, had been restored to Mertoun, as the lawful custodier thereof, until the right owner should be in a situation to establish his right to them. Mertoun was at first desirous to throw back upon Justice the charge which she was disposed to intrust him with; but on perusing one or two of the papers he hastily changed his mind. In

"Cleveland, the pirate Cleveland!" answered Norna; "and by me, whose counsel he scorned, he has been permitted to meet his fate."

"Thou most wretched of women!" said Mertoun, speaking from between his clenched teeth; "thou hast slain thy son as well as thy father!"

"My son! what son? what mean you? Mordaunt is your son—your only son!" exclaimed Norna; "is he not? Tell me quickly—is he not?"

"Mordaunt is indeed *my* son," said Mertoun; "the laws, at least, gave him to me as such. But oh, unhappy Ulla! Cleveland is your son as well as mine; blood of our blood, bone of our bone; and if you have given him to death I will end my wretched life along with him!"

"Stay—hold—stop, Vaughan!" said Norna. "I am not yet overcome; prove but to me the truth of what you say, I would find help, if I should evoke hell! But prove your words, else believe them I cannot."

"*Thou* help! wretched, overweening woman! In what have thy combinations and thy stratagems—the legerdemain of lunacy, the mere quackery of insanity—in what have these involved thee? And yet I will speak to thee as reasonable—nay, I will admit thee as powerful. Hear, then, Ulla, the proofs which you demand, and find a remedy, if thou canst:—

"When I fled from Orkney," he continued, after a pause, "it is now five-and-twenty years since, I bore with me the unhappy offspring to whom you had given light. It was sent to me by one of your kinswomen, with an account of your illness, which was soon followed by a generally received belief of your death. It avails not to tell in what misery I left Europe. I found refuge in Hispaniola, wherein a fair young Spaniard undertook the task of comforter. I married her; she became mother of the youth called Mordaunt Mertoun."

"You married her!" said Norna, in a tone of deep reproach.

"I did, Ulla," answered Mertoun; "but you were avenged. She proved faithless, and her infidelity left me in doubts whether the child she bore had a right to call me father. But I also was avenged."

"You murdered her!" said Norna, with a dreadful shriek.

"I did that," said Mertoun, without a more direct reply, "which made an instant flight from Hispaniola necessary. Your son I carried with me to Tortuga, where we had a small settlement. Mordaunt Vaughan, my son by marriage, about three or four years younger, was residing in Port Royal, for the advantages of an English education. I resolved never to see him again, but I continued to support him. Our settlement was plundered by the Spaniards when Clement was but fifteen. Want came to aid despair and a troubled conscience. I became a corsair, and involved Clement in the same desperate trade. His skill and bravery, though then a mere boy, gained him a separate

command; and after a lapse of two or three years, while we were on different cruises, my crew rose on me, and left me for dead on the beach of one of the Bermudas. I recovered, however, and my first inquiries, after a tedious illness, were after Clement. He, I heard, had been also marooned by a rebellious crew, and put ashore on a desert islet, to perish with want. I believed he had so perished."

"And what assures you that he did not?" said Ulla; "or how comes this Cleveland to be identified with Vaughan?"

"To change a name is common with such adventurers," answered Mertoun, "and Clement had apparently found that of Vaughan had become too notorious; and this change, in his case, prevented me from hearing any tidings of him. It was then that remorse seized me, and that, detesting all nature, but especially the sex to which Louisa belonged, I resolved to do penance in the wild islands of Zetland for the rest of my life. To subject myself to fasts and to the scourge was the advice of the holy Catholic priests, whom I consulted. But I devised a nobler penance; I determined to bring with me the unhappy boy Mordaunt, and to keep always before me the living memorial of my misery and my guilt. I have done so, and I have thought over both, till reason has often trembled on her throne. And now to drive me to utter madness, my Clement—my own, my undoubted son—revives from the dead to be consigned to an infamous death, by the machinations of his own mother!"

"Away, away!" said Norna, with a laugh, when she had heard the story to an end, "this is a legend framed by the old corsair, to interest my aid in favour of a guilty comrade. How could I mistake Mordaunt for my son, their ages being so different?"

"The dark complexion and manly stature may have done much," said Basil Mertoun; "strong imagination must have done the rest."

"But give me proofs—give me proofs that this Cleveland is my son, and, believe me, this sun shall sooner sink in the east than they shall have power to harm a hair of his head."

"These papers, these journals," said Mertoun, offering the pocket-book.

"I cannot read them," she said, after an effort, "my brain is dizzy."

"Clement had also tokens which you may remember, but they must have become the booty of his captors. He had a silver box with a Runic inscription, with which in far other days you presented me—a golden chaplet."

"A box!" said Norna hastily. "Cleveland gave me one but a day since. I have never looked at it till now."

Eagerly she pulled it out, eagerly examined the legend around the lid, and as eagerly exclaimed, "They may now indeed call me Reimkennar, for by this rhyme I know myself murderess of my son as well as of my father!"

The conviction of the strong delusion under which she had laboured was so overwhelming, that she sunk down at the foot of one of the pillars. Mertoun shouted for help, though in despair of receiving any. The sexton, however, entered, and, hopeless of all assistance from Norna, the distracted father rushed out, to learn, if possible, the fate of his son.

CHAPTER XLII.

"Go, some of you, cry a reprieve!"

Beggars' Opera.

CAPTAIN WEATHERPORT had, before this time, reached Kirkwall in person, and was received with great joy and thankfulness by the Magistrates, who had assembled in council for the purpose. The Provost, in particular, expressed himself delighted with the providential arrival of the *Halcyon*, at the very conjuncture when the Pirate could not escape her. The Captain looked a little surprised, and said, "For that, sir, you may thank the information you yourself supplied."

"That I supplied?" said the Provost, somewhat astonished.

"Yes, sir," answered Captain Weatherport, "I understand you to be George Torfe, Chief Magistrate of Kirkwall, who subscribes this letter."

The astonished Provost took the letter addressed to Captain Weatherport of the *Halcyon*, stating the arrival, force, etc., of the pirates' vessel; but adding, that they had heard of the *Halcyon* being on the coast, and that they were on their guard and ready to baffle her, by going among the shoals, and through the islands and holms, where the frigate could not easily follow; and at the worst, they were desperate enough to propose running the sloop ashore and blowing her up, by which much booty and treasure would be lost to the captors. The letter, therefore, suggested, that the *Halcyon* should cruise betwixt Duncansbay Head and Cape Wrath, for two or three days, to relieve the pirates of the alarm her neighbourhood occasioned, and lull them into security,

the more especially as the letter-writer knew it to be their intention, if the frigate left the coast, to go into Stromness Bay and there put their guns ashore for some necessary repairs, or even for careening their vessel, if they could find means. The letter concluded by assuring Captain Weatherport that, if he could bring his frigate into Stromness Bay on the morning of the 24th of August, he would have a good bargain of the pirates—if sooner, he was not unlikely to miss them.

"This letter is not of my writing or subscribing, Captain Weatherport," said the Provost; "nor would I have ventured to advise any delay in your coming hither."

The Captain was surprised in his turn. "All I know is, that it reached me when I was in the Bay of Thurso, and that I gave the boat's crew that brought it five dollars for crossing the Pentland Frith in very rough weather. They had a dumb dwarf as cockswain, the ugliest urchin my eyes ever opened upon. I give you much credit for the accuracy of your intelligence, Mr. Provost."

"It is lucky as it is," said the Provost; "yet I question whether the writer of this letter would not rather that you had found the nest cold and the bird flown."

So saying, he handed the letter to Magnus Troil, who returned it with a smile, but without any observation, aware, doubtless, with the sagacious reader, that Norna had her own reasons for calculating with accuracy on the date of the *Halcyon's* arrival.

Without puzzling himself farther concerning a circumstance which seemed inexplicable, the Captain requested that the examinations might proceed; and Cleveland and Altamont, as he chose to be called, were brought up the first of the pirate crew, on the charge of having acted as Captain and Lieutenant. They had just commenced the examination, when, after some expostulation with the officers who kept the door, Basil Mertoun burst into the apartment and exclaimed, "Take the old victim for the young one! I am Basil Vaughan, too well known on the windward station. Take my life, and spare my son's!"

All were astonished, and none more than Magnus Troil, who hastily explained to the Magistrates and Captain Weatherport that this gentleman had been living peaceably and honestly on the Mainland of Zetland for many years.

"In that case," said the Captain, "I wash my hands of the poor man, for he is safe, under two proclamations of mercy; and, by my soul, when I see them, the father and his offspring, hanging on each other's neck, I wish I could say as much for the son."

"But how is it—how can it be?" said the Provost. "We always called the old man Mertoun, and the young Cleveland, and now it seems they are both named Vaughan."

"Vaughan," answered Magnus, "is a name which I have some reason to remember; and from what I have lately heard from my cousin Norna, that old man has a right to bear it."

"'I am Basil Vaughan, too well known on the windward station. Take my life, and spare my son's!'" (p. 462).

"And I trust the young man also," said the Captain, who had been looking over a memorandum. "Listen to me a moment," added he, addressing the younger Vaughan, whom we have hitherto called Cleve-

land. "Hark you, sir, your name is said to be Clement Vaughan. Are you the same who, then a mere boy, commanded a party of rovers, who, about eight or nine years ago, pillaged a Spanish village called Quempoa, on the Spanish Main, with the purpose of seizing some treasure?"

"It will avail me nothing to deny it," answered the prisoner.

"No," said Captain Weatherport, "but it may do you service to admit it. Well, the muleteers escaped with the treasure, while you were engaged in protecting, at the hazard of your own life, the honour of two Spanish ladies against the brutality of your followers. Do you remember anything of this?"

"I am sure *I* do," said Jack Bunce; "for our Captain here was marooned for his gallantry, and I narrowly escaped flogging and pickling for having taken his part."

"When these points are established," said Captain Weatherport, "Vaughan's life is safe. The women he saved were persons of quality, daughters to the governor of the province, and application was long since made, by the grateful Spaniard, to our Government, for favour to be shown to their preserver. I had special orders about Clement Vaughan, when I had a commission for cruising upon the pirates, in the West Indies, six or seven years since. But Vaughan was gone then as a name amongst them, and I heard enough of Cleveland in his room. However, Captain, be you Cleveland or Vaughan, I think that, as the Quempoa hero, I can assure you a free pardon when you arrive in London."

Cleveland bowed, and the blood mounted to his face. Mertoun fell on his knees, and exhausted himself in thanksgiving to Heaven. They were removed, amidst the sympathising sobs of the spectators.

"And now, good Master Lieutenant, what have you got to say for yourself?" said Captain Weatherport to the *ci-devant* Roscius.

"Why, little or nothing, please your honour; only that I wish your honour could find my name in that book of mercy you have in your hand; for I stood by Captain Clement Vaughan in that Quempoa business."

"You call yourself Frederick Altamont?" said Captain Weatherport. "I can see no such name here; one John Bounce, or Bunce, the lady put on her tablets."

"Why, that is me—that is I myself, Captain—I can prove it; and I am determined, though the sound be something plebeian, rather to live Jack Bunce, than to hang as Frederick Altamont."

"In that case," said the Captain, "I can give you some hopes as John Bunce."

"Thank your noble worship!" shouted Bunce. Then changing his tone, he said, "Ah, since an alias has such virtue, poor Dick Fletcher might have come off as Timothy Tugmutton; but howsomdever, d'ye see, to use his own phrase——"

"Away with the Lieutenant," said the Captain, "and bring forward Goffe and the other fellows; there will be ropes reeved for some of them, I think." And this prediction promised to be amply fulfilled, so strong was the proof which was brought against them.

The *Halcyon* was accordingly ordered round to carry the whole of the prisoners to London, for which she set sail in the course of two days.

During the time that the unfortunate Cleveland remained at Kirkwall he was treated with civility by the Captain of the *Halcyon*; and the kindness of his old acquaintance, Magnus Troil, who knew in secret how closely he was allied to his blood, pressed on him accommodations of every kind, more than he could be prevailed on to accept.

Norna, whose interest in the unhappy prisoner was still more deep, was at this time unable to express it. The sexton had found her lying on the pavement in a swoon, and when she recovered, her mind for the time had totally lost its equipoise, and it became necessary to place her under the restraint of watchful attendants.

Of the sisters of Burgh-Westra, Cleveland only heard that they remained ill, in consequence of the fright to which they had been subjected, until the evening before the *Halcyon* sailed, when he received, by a private conveyance, the following billet:—"Farewell, Cleveland—we part for ever; and it is right that we should. Be virtuous and be happy. The delusions which a solitary education and limited acquaintance with the modern world had spread around me are gone and dissipated for ever. But in you, I am sure, I have been thus far free from error—that you are one to whom good is naturally more attractive than evil, and whom only necessity, example, and habit have forced into your late course of life. Think of me as one who no longer exists, unless you should become as much the object of general praise as now of general reproach; and then think of me as one who will rejoice in your reviving fame, though she must never see you more!" The note was signed M. T.; and Cleveland, with a deep emotion, which he testified even by tears, read it a hundred times over, and then clasped it to his bosom.

Mordaunt Mertoun heard by letter from his father, but in a very different style. Basil bade him farewell for ever, and acquitted him henceforward of the duties of a son, as one on whom he, notwithstanding the exertions of many years, had found himself unable to bestow the affections of a parent. The letter informed him of a recess in the old house of Jarlshof, in which the writer had deposited a considerable quantity of specie and of treasure, which he desired Mordaunt to use as his own. "You need not fear," the letter bore, "either that you lay yourself under obligation to me, or that you are sharing the spoils of piracy. What is now given over to you is almost entirely the property of your deceased mother, Louisa Gonzago, and is yours by every right.

Let us forgive each other," was the conclusion, "as they who must meet no more." And they never met more; for the elder Mertoun, against whom no charge was ever preferred, disappeared after the fate of Cleveland was determined, and was generally believed to have retired into a foreign convent.

The fate of Cleveland will be most briefly expressed in a letter which Minna received within two months after the *Halcyon* left Kirkwall. The family were then assembled at Burgh-Westra, and Mordaunt was a member of it for the time, the good Udaller thinking he could never sufficiently repay the activity which he had shown in the defence of his daughters. Norna, then beginning to recover from her temporary alienation of mind, was a guest in the family, and Minna, who was sedulous in her attention upon this unfortunate victim of mental delusion, was seated with her, watching each symptom of returning reason, when the letter we allude to was placed in her hands.

"Minna," it said, "dearest Minna! farewell, and for ever! Believe me, I never meant you wrong—never. From the moment I came to know you, I resolved to detach myself from my hateful comrades, and had framed a thousand schemes, which have proved as vain as they deserved to be—for why, or how, should the fate of her that is so lovely, pure, and innocent be involved with that of one so guilty? Of these dreams I will speak no more. The stern reality of my situation is much milder than I either expected or deserved; and the little good I did has outweighed, in the minds of honourable and merciful judges, much that was evil and criminal. I have not only been exempted from the ignominious death to which several of my compeers are sentenced; but Captain Weatherport, about once more to sail for the Spanish Main, under the apprehension of an immediate war with that country, has generously solicited and obtained permission to employ me, and two or three more of my less guilty associates, in the same service—a measure recommended to himself by his own generous compassion, and to others by our knowledge of the coast, and of local circumstances, which, by whatever means acquired, we now hope to use for the service of our country. Minna, you will hear my name pronounced with honour, or you will never hear it again. If virtue can give happiness, I need not wish it to you, for it is yours already. —Farewell, Minna."

Minna wept so bitterly over this letter, that it attracted the attention of the convalescent Norna. She snatched it from the hand of her kinswoman, and read it over at first with the confused air of one to whom it conveyed no intelligence; then with a dawn of recollection, then with a burst of mingled joy and grief, in which she dropped it from her hand. Minna snatched it up, and retired with her treasure to her own apartment.

From that time Norna appeared to assume a different character. Her dress was changed to one of a more simple and less imposing

appearance. Her dwarf was dismissed, with ample provision for his future comfort. She showed no desire of resuming her erratic life; and directed her observatory, as it might be called, on Fitful Head, to be dismantled. She refused the name of Norna, and would only be addressed by her real appellation of Ulla Troil. But the most important change remained behind. Formerly, from the dreadful dictates of spiritual despair, arising out of the circumstances of her father's death, she seemed to have considered herself as an outcast from Divine grace; besides, that, enveloped in the vain occult sciences which she pretended to practise, her study, like that of Chaucer's physician,

"She snatched it from the hand of her kinswoman, and read it over" (p. 466).

had been "but little in the Bible." Now, the sacred volume was seldom laid aside; and, to the poor ignorant people who came as formerly to invoke her power over the elements, she only replied—"*The winds are in the hollow of His hand.*" Her conversion was not, perhaps, altogether rational; for this, the state of a mind disordered by such a complication of horrid incidents, probably prevented. But it seemed to be sincere, and was certainly useful. She appeared deeply to repent of her former presumptuous attempts to interfere with the course of human events, superintended as they are by far higher powers, and expressed bitter compunction when such her former pretensions were in any manner recalled to her memory. She still showed a

partiality to Mordaunt, though, perhaps, arising chiefly from habit; nor was it easy to know how much or how little she remembered of the complicated events in which she had been connected. When she died, which was about four years after the events we have commemorated, it was found that, at the special and earnest request of Minna Troil, she had conveyed her very considerable property to Brenda. A clause in her will specially directed that all the books, implements of her laboratory, and other things connected with her former studies, should be committed to the flames.

About two years before Norna's death Brenda was wedded to Mordaunt Mertoun. It was some time before old Magnus Troil, with all his affection for his daughter, and all his partiality for Mordaunt, was able frankly to reconcile himself to this match. But Mordaunt's accomplishments were peculiarly to the Udaller's taste, and the old man felt the impossibility of supplying his place in his family so absolutely, that at length his Norse blood gave way to the natural feeling of the heart, and he comforted his pride while he looked around him, and saw what he considered as the encroachments of the Scottish gentry upon the COUNTRY (so Zetland is fondly termed by its inhabitants), that as well "his daughter married the son of an English pirate, as of a Scottish thief," in scornful allusion to the Highland and Border families, to whom Zetland owes many respectable landholders; but whose ancestors were generally esteemed more renowned for ancient family and high courage than for accurately regarding the trifling distinctions of *meum* and *tuum*. The jovial old man lived to the extremity of human life, with the happy prospect of a numerous succession in the family of his younger daughter; and having his board cheered alternately by the minstrelsy of Claud Halcro, and enlightened by the lucubrations of Mr. Triptolemus Yellowley, who, laying aside his high pretensions, was, when he became better acquainted with the manners of the islanders, and remembered the various misadventures which had attended his premature attempts at reformation, an honest and useful representative of his principal, and never so happy as when he could escape from the spare commons of his sister Barbara to the genial table of the Udaller. Barbara's temper also was much softened by the unexpected restoration of the horn of silver coins (the property of Norna), which she had concealed in the mansion of old Stourburgh, for achieving some of her mysterious plans, but which she now restored to those by whom it had been accidentally discovered, with an intimation, however, that it would again disappear unless a reasonable portion was expended on the sustenance of the family, a precaution to which Tronda Dronsdaughter (probably an agent of Norna's) owed her escape from a slow and wasting death by inanition.

Mordaunt and Brenda were as happy as our mortal condition permits us to be. They admired and loved each other, enjoyed easy circumstances, had duties to discharge which they did not neglect; and,

clear in conscience as light of heart, laughed, sung, danced, daffed the world aside, and bid it pass.

But Minna, the high-minded and imaginative Minna; she, gifted with such depth of feeling and enthusiasm, yet doomed to see both blighted in early youth, because, with the inexperience of a disposition equally romantic and ignorant, she had built the fabric of her happiness on a quicksand instead of a rock, was she, could she be happy? Reader, she *was* happy; for, whatever may be alleged to the contrary by the sceptic and the scorner, to each duty performed there is assigned a degree of mental peace and high consciousness of honourable exertion, corresponding to the difficulty of the task accomplished. That rest of the body which succeeds to hard and industrious toil is not to be compared to the repose which the spirit enjoys under similar circumstances. Her resignation, however, and the constant attention which she paid to her father, her sister, the afflicted Norna, and to all who had claims on her, were neither Minna's sole nor her most precious source of comfort. Like Norna, but under a more regulated judgment, she learned to exchange the visions of wild enthusiasm which had exerted and misled her imagination, for a truer and purer connection with the world beyond us, than could be learned from the sagas of heathen bards, or the visions of later rhymers. To this she owed the support by which she was enabled, after various accounts of the honourable and gallant conduct of Cleveland, to read with resignation, and even with a sense of comfort, mingled with sorrow, that he had at length fallen, leading the way in a gallant and honourable enterprise, which was successfully accomplished by those companions to whom his determined bravery had opened the road. Bunce, his fantastic follower in good, as formerly in evil, transmitted an account to Minna of this melancholy event in terms which showed that, though his head was weak, his heart had not been utterly corrupted by the lawless life which he had for some time led, or at least that it had been amended by the change; and that he himself had gained credit and promotion in the same action, seemed to be of little consequence to him, compared with the loss of his old captain and comrade.* Minna read the intelligence, and thanked Heaven, even while the eyes which she lifted up were streaming with tears, that the death of Cleveland had been in the bed of honour; nay, she even had the courage to add to her gratitude, that he had been snatched from a situation of temptation ere circumstances had overcome his new-born virtue; and so strongly did this reflection operate, that her life, after the immediate pain of this event had passed away, seemed not only as resigned, but even more cheerful than before. Her thoughts, however, were detached from the world, and only visited it, with an interest like

* We have been able to learn nothing with certainty of Bunce's fate; but our friend, Dr. Dryasdust, believes he may be identified with an old gentleman who, in the beginning of the reign of George I., attended the Rose Coffee-house regularly, went to the theatre every night, told mercilessly long stories about the Spanish Main, controlled reckonings, bullied waiters, and was generally known by the name of Captain Bounce.

that which guardian spirits take for their charge, in behalf of those friends with whom she lived in love, or of the poor whom she could serve and comfort. Thus passed her life, enjoying, from all who approached her, an affection enhanced by reverence; insomuch, that when her friends sorrowed for her death, which arrived at a late period of her existence, they were comforted by the fond reflection, that the humanity which she then laid down was the only circumstance which had placed her, in the words of Scripture, "a little lower than the angels!"

NOTES.

NOTE I., p. 19.—NORSE FRAGMENTS.

Near the conclusion of this chapter it is noticed that the old Norwegian sagas were preserved and often repeated by the fishermen of Orkney and Zetland, while that language was not yet quite forgotten. Mr. Baikie, of Tankerness, a most respectable inhabitant of Kirkwall, and an Orkney proprietor, assured me of the following curious fact.

A clergyman, who was not long deceased, remembered well when some remnants of the Norse were still spoken in the island called North Ronaldshaw. When Gray's Ode, entitled the "Fatal Sisters," was first published, or at least first reached that remote island, the reverend gentleman had the well-judged curiosity to read it to some of the old persons of the isle, as a poem which regarded the history of their own country. They listened with great attention to the preliminary stanzas :—

"Now the storm begins to lour,
Haste the loom of hell prepare,
Iron sleet of arrowy shower
Hurtles in the darken'd air."

But when they had heard a verse or two more, they interrupted the reader, telling him they knew the song well in the Norse language, and had often sung it to him when he asked them for an old song. They called it the Magicians, or the Enchantresses. It would have been singular news to the elegant translator, when executing his version from the text of Bartholine, to have learned that the Norse original was still preserved by tradition in a remote corner of the British dominions. The circumstances will probably justify what is said in the text concerning the traditions of the inhabitants of those remote isles, at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Even yet, though the Norse language is entirely disused, except in so far as particular words and phrases are still retained, these fishers of the Ultima Thule are a generation much attached to these ancient legends. Of this the author learned a singular instance.

About twenty years ago a missionary clergyman had taken the resolution of traversing those wild islands, where he supposed there might be a lack of religious instruction, which he believed himself capable of supplying. After being some days at sea in an open boat he arrived at North Ronaldshaw, where his appearance excited great speculation. He was a very little man, dark-complexioned, and from the fatigue he had sustained in removing from one island to another appeared before them ill-dressed and unshaved ; so that the inhabitants set him down as one of the Ancient Picts, or, as they call them with the usual strong guttural, Peghts. How they might have received the poor preacher in this character was at least dubious ; and the schoolmaster of the parish, who had given quarters to the fatigued traveller, set off to consult with Mr. S——, the able and ingenious engineer of the Scottish Lighthouse Service, who chanced to be on the island.

As his skill and knowledge were in the highest repute, it was conceived that Mr. S—— could decide at once whether the stranger was a Peght, or ought to be treated as such. Mr. S—— was so good-natured as to attend the summons, with the view of rendering the preacher some service. The poor missionary, who had watched for three nights, was now fast asleep, little dreaming what odious suspicions were current respecting him. The inhabitants were assembled round the door. Mr. S——, understanding the traveller's condition, declined disturbing him, upon which the islanders produced a pair of very little uncouth-looking boots, with prodigiously thick soles, and appealed to him whether it was possible such articles of raiment could belong to any one but a Peght. Mr. S——, finding the prejudices of the natives so strong, was induced to enter the sleeping apartment of the traveller, and was surprised to recognise in the supposed Peght a person whom he had known in his worldly profession of an Edinburgh shopkeeper before he had assumed his present vocation. Of course he was enabled to refute all suspicions of Peghtism.

Note II., p. 19.—Monsters of the Northern Seas.

I have said, in the text, that the wondrous tales told by Pontoppidan, the Archbishop of Upsal, still find believers in the Northern Archipelago. It is in vain they are cancelled even in the later editions of Guthrie's Grammar, of which instructive work they used to form the chapter far most attractive to juvenile readers. But the same causes which probably gave birth to the legends concerning mermaids, sea-snakes, krakens, and other marvellous inhabitants of the Northern Ocean, are still afloat in those climates where they took their rise. They had their origin probably from the eagerness of curiosity manifested by our elegant poetess, Mrs. Hemans:—

> "What hidest thou in thy treasure-caves and cells,
> Thou ever-sounding and mysterious Sea?"

The additional mystic gloom which rests on these northern billows for half the year, joined to the imperfect glance obtained of occasional objects, encourage the timid or the fanciful to give way to imagination, and frequently to shape out a distinct story from some object half seen and imperfectly examined. Thus, some years since, a large object was observed in the beautiful Bay of Scalloway in Zetland, so much in vulgar opinion resembling the kraken, that though it might be distinguished for several days, if the exchange of darkness to twilight can be termed so, yet the hardy boatmen shuddered to approach it, for fear of being drawn down by the suction supposed to attend its sinking. It was probably the hull of some vessel which had foundered at sea.

The belief in mermaids, so fanciful and pleasing in itself, is ever and anon refreshed by a strange tale from the remote shores of some solitary islet.

The author heard a mariner of some reputation in his class vouch for having seen the celebrated sea-serpent. It appeared, so far as could be guessed, to be about a hundred feet long, with the wild mane and fiery eyes which old writers ascribe to the monster; but it is not unlikely the spectator might, in the doubtful light, be deceived by the appearance of a good Norway log floating on the waves. I have only to add, that the remains of an animal, supposed to belong to this latter species, were driven on shore in the Zetland Isles, within the recollection of man. Part of the bones were sent to London, and pronounced by Sir Joseph Banks to be those of a basking shark; yet it would seem that an animal so well known ought to have been immediately distinguished by the northern fishermen.

Note III., p. 80.—Sale of Winds.

The King of Sweden, the same Eric quoted by Mordaunt, "was," says Olaus Magnus, "in his time held second to none in the magical art; and he was so familiar with the evil spirits whom he worshipped, that what way soever he turned his cap, the wind would presently blow that way. For this he was called Windy-

cap."—*Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus Romæ*, 1555. It is well known that the Laplanders derive a profitable trade in selling *winds*, but it is perhaps less notorious, that within these few years such a commodity might be purchased on British ground, where it was likely to be in great request. At the village of Stromness, on the Orkney main island, called Pomona, lived in 1814 an aged dame, called Bessie Millie, who helped out her subsistence by selling favourable winds to mariners. He was a venturous master of a vessel who left the roadstead of Stromness without paying his offering to propitiate Bessie Millie; her fee was extremely moderate, being exactly sixpence, for which, as she explained herself, she boiled her kettle, and gave the bark advantage of her prayers, for she disclaimed all unlawful arts. The wind thus petitioned for was sure, she said, to arrive, though occasionally the mariners had to wait some time for it. The woman's dwelling and appearance were not unbecoming her pretensions; her house, which was on the brow of the steep hill on which Stromness is founded, was only accessible by a series of dirty and precipitous lanes, and for exposure might have been the abode of Æolus himself, in whose commodities the inhabitants dealt. She herself was, as she told us, nearly one hundred years old, withered and dried up like a mummy. A clay-coloured kerchief, folded round her head, corresponded in colour to her corpse-like complexion. Two light-blue eyes, that gleamed with a lustre like that of insanity, an utterance of astonishing rapidity, a nose and chin that almost met together, and a ghastly expression of cunning, gave her the effect of Hecaté. She remembered Gow the pirate, who had been a native of these islands, in which he closed his career, as mentioned in the Preface. Such was Bessie Millie, to whom the mariners paid a sort of tribute, with a feeling betwixt jest and earnest.

Note IV., p. 88.—Reluctance to save a Drowning Man.

It is remarkable that in an archipelago where so many persons must be necessarily endangered by the waves, so strange and inhuman a maxim should have ingrafted itself upon the minds of a people otherwise kind, moral, and hospitable. But all with whom I have spoken agree that it was almost general in the beginning of the eighteenth century, and was with difficulty weeded out by the sedulous instructions of the clergy, and the rigorous injunctions of the proprietors. There is little doubt it had been originally introduced as an excuse for suffering those who attempted to escape from the wreck to perish unassisted, so that, there being no survivor, she might be considered as lawful plunder. A story was told me, I hope an untrue one, that a vessel having got ashore among the breakers on one of the remote Zetland islands, five or six men, the whole or greater part of the unfortunate crew, endeavoured to land by assistance of a hawser, which they had secured to a rock. The inhabitants were assembled, and looked on with some uncertainty, till an old man said, "Sirs, if these men come ashore, the additional mouths will eat all the meal we have in store for winter; and how are we to get more?" A young fellow, moved with this argument, struck the rope asunder with his axe, and all the poor wretches were immersed among the breakers, and perished.

Note V., p. 92.—Mair Wrecks ere Winter.

The ancient Zetlander looked upon the sea as the provider of his living, not only by the plenty produced by the fishings, but by the spoil of wrecks. Some particular islands have fallen off very considerably in their rent, since the commissioners of the lighthouses have ordered lights on the Isle of Sanda and the Pentland Skerries. A gentleman, familiar with those seas, expressed surprise at seeing the farmer of one of the isles in a boat with a very old pair of sails. "Had it been His will," said the man, with an affected deference to Providence, very inconsistent with the sentiment of his speech, "Had it been *His* will that light had not been placed yonder, I would have had enough of new sails last winter."

Note VI., p. 129.—Zetland Cornmills

There is certainly something very extraordinary to a stranger in Zetland cornmills. They are of the smallest possible size; the wheel which drives them is horizontal, and the cogs are turned diagonally to the water. The beam itself stands upright, and is inserted in a stone quern of the old-fashioned construction, which it turns round, and thus performs its duty. Had Robinson Crusoe ever been in Zetland he would have had no difficulty in contriving a machine for grinding corn in his desert island. These mills are thatched over in a little hovel, which has much the air of a pig sty. There may be five hundred such mills on one island, not capable any one of them of grinding above a sackful of corn at a time.

Note VIII., p. 171.—The Sword-Dance.

The Sword-Dance is celebrated in general terms by Olaus Magnus. He seems to have considered it as peculiar to the Norwegians, from whom it may have passed to the Orkneymen and Zetlanders, with other northern customs.

"Of their Dancing in Arms.

"Moreover, the northern Goths and Swedes had another sport to exercise youth withall, that they will dance and skip amongst naked swords and dangerous weapons: And this they do after the manner of masters of defence, as they are taught from their youth by skilful teachers, that dance before them, and sing to it. And this play is showed especially about Shrovetide called in Italian *Maccharárum.* For, before carnivals, all the youth dance for eight days together, holding their swords up, but within the scabbards, for three times turning about; and then they do it with their naked swords lifted up. After this, turning more moderately, taking the points and pummels one of the other, they change ranks, and place themselves in an triagonal figure, and this they call *Rosam*; and presently they dissolve it by drawing back their swords and lifting them up, that upon every one's head there may be made a square Rosa, and then by a most nimbly whisking their swords about collaterally, they quickly leap back, and end the sport, which they guide with pipes or songs, or both together; first by a more heavy, then by a more vehement, and lastly, by a most vehement dancing. But this speculation is scarce to be understood but by those who look on, how comely and decent it is, when at one word, or one commanding, the whole armed multitude is directed to fall to fight, and clergymen may exercise themselves, and mingle themselves amongst others at this sport, because it is all guided by most wise reason."

To the Primate's account of the sword-dance I am able to add the words sung or chanted, on occasion of this dance, as it is still performed in Papa Stour, a remote island of Zetland, where alone the custom keeps its ground. It is, it will be observed by antiquaries, a species of play or mystery, in which the Seven Champions of Christendom make their appearance, as in the interlude presented in *All's Well that Ends Well.* This dramatic curiosity was most kindly procured for my use by Dr. Scott of Hazlar Hospital, son of my friend Mr. Scott of Mewbie, Zetland. Mr. Hibbert has, in his Description of the Zetland Islands, given an account of the sword-dance, but somewhat less full than the following:—

"Words used as a Prelude to the Sword-Dance, a Danish or Norwegian Ballet, composed some Centuries Ago and preserved in Papa Stour, Zetland.

Personæ Dramatis.*

(*Enter* Master, *in the character of* St. George.)

Brave gentles all within this boor,†
If ye delight in any sport,

* So placed in the old MS.

† *Boor*—so spelt, to accord with the vulgar pronunciation of the word *bower.*

Come see me dance upon this floor,
Which to you all shall yield comfort.
Then shall I dance in such a sort,
As possible I may or can;
You, minstrel man, play me a Porte,*
That I on this floor may prove a man.
(*He bows, and dances in a line.*)
Now have I danced with heart and hand,
Brave gentles all, as you may see,
For I have been tried in many a land,
As yet the truth can testify;
In England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Italy, and Spain,
Have I been tried with that good sword of steel.
(*Draws and flourishes.*)
Yet, I deny that ever a man did make me yield;
For in my body there is strength,
As by my manhood may be seen;
And I, with that good sword of length,
Have oftentimes in perils been,
And over champions I was king.
And by the strength of this right hand,
Once on a day I kill'd fifteen,
And left them dead upon the land.
Therefore, brave minstrel, do not care,
But play to me a Porte most light,
That I no longer do forbear,
But dance in all these gentles' sight;
Although my strength makes you abased,
Brave gentles all, be not afraid,
For here are six champions, with me, staid,
All by my manhood I have raised.
(*He dances.*)
Since I have danced, I think it best
To call my brethren in your sight,
That I may have a little rest,
And they may dance with all their might;
With heart and hand as they are knights,
And shake their swords of steel so bright,
And show their main strength on this floor,
For we shall have another bout
Before we pass out of this boor.
Therefore, brave minstrel, do not care
To play to me a Porte most light,
That I no longer do forbear,
But dance in all these gentles' sight.
(*He dances, and then introduces his knights as under.*)
Stout James of Spain, both tried and stour,†
Thine acts are known full well indeed;
And champion Dennis, a French knight,
Who stout and bold is to be seen;
And David, a Welshman born,
Who is come of noble blood;
And Patrick also, who blew the horn,
An Irish knight, amongst the wood.
Of Italy, brave Anthony the good,
And Andrew of Scotland King;
St. George of England, brave indeed,
Who to the Jews wrought muckle tinte.‡
Away with this!—Let us come to sport,
Since that ye have a mind to war,
Since that ye have this bargain sought,
Come let us fight and do not fear.

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* *Porte*—so spelt in the original. The word is known as indicating a piece of music on the bagpipe, to which ancient instrument, which is of Scandinavian origin, the sword-dance may have been originally composed.

† *Stour*, great.

‡ *Muckle tinte*, much loss or harm; so in MS.

Therefore, brave minstrel, do not care
To play to me a Porte most light,
That I no longer do forbear,
But dance in all these gentles' sight.
(*He dances and advances to* JAMES *of Spain.*)
Stout James of Spain, both tried and stour,
Thine acts are known full well indeed,
Present thyself within our sight,
Without either fear or dread.
Count not for favour or for feid,
Since of thy acts thou hast been sure;
Brave James of Spain, I will thee lead,
To prove thy manhood on this floor.
(JAMES *dances.*)
Brave champion Dennis, a French knight,
Who stout and bold is to be seen,
Present thyself here in our sight,
Thou brave French knight,
Who bold hast been;
Since thou such valiant acts hast done,
Come let us see some of them now
With courtesy, thou brave French knight,
Draw out thy sword of noble hue.
(DENNIS *dances while the others retire to a side.*)
Brave David a bow must string, and with awe
Set up a wand upon a stand,
And that brave David will cleave in twa.*
(DAVID *dances solus.*)
Here is, I think, an Irish knight,
Who does not fear, or does not fright,
To prove thyself a valiant man,
As thou hast done full often bright;
Brave Patrick, dance, if that thou can.
(*He dances.*)
Thou stout Italian, come thou here;
Thy name is Anthony, most stout;
Draw out thy sword that is most clear,
And do thou fight without any doubt:
Thy leg thou shake, thy neck thou lout,†
And show some courtesy on this floor,
For we shall have another bout,
Before we pass out of this boor.
Thou kindly Scotsman, come thou here;
Thy name is Andrew of Fair Scotland;
Draw out thy sword that is most clear,
Fight for thy king with thy right hand;
And aye as long as thou canst stand,
Fight for thy king with all thy heart;
And then, for to confirm his band,
Make all his enemies for to smart.—(*He dances.*)
(*Music begins.*)

FIGUIR.‡

"The six stand in rank with their swords reclining on their shoulders. The Master (St. George) dances, and then strikes the sword of James of Spain, who follows George, then dances, strikes the sword of Dennis, who follows behind James. In like manner the rest—the music playing—swords as before. After the six are brought out of rank, they and the master form a circle, and hold the swords point and hilt. This circle is danced round twice. The whole, headed by the master, pass under the swords held in a vaulted manner. They jump over the swords. This naturally places the swords across, which they disentangle by

* Something is evidently amiss or omitted here. David probably exhibited some feat of archery.

† *Loot*—to bend or bow down, pronounced *loot*, as *doubt* is *doot* in Scotland.

‡ *Figuir*—so spelt in MS.

passing under their right sword. They take up the seven swords, and form a circle, in which they dance round.

"The master runs under the sword opposite, which he jumps over backwards. The others do the same. He then passes under the right-hand sword, which the others follow, in which position they dance, until commanded by the master, when they form into a circle, and dance round as before. They then jump over the right-hand sword, by which means their backs are to the circle, and their hands across their backs. They dance round in that form until the master calls 'Loose,' when they pass under the right sword, and are in a perfect circle.

"The master lays down his sword, and lays hold of the point of James's sword. He then turns himself, James, and the others, into a clew. When so formed, he passes under out of the midst of the circle; the others follow; they vault as before. After several other evolutions, they throw themselves into a circle, with their arms across the breast. They afterwards form such figures as to form a shield of their swords, and the shield is so compact that the master and his knights dance alternately with this shield upon their heads. It is then laid down upon the floor. Each knight lays hold of their former points and hilts with their hands across, which disentangle by figuirs directly contrary to those that formed the shield. This finishes the Ballet.

"EPILOGUE.

Mars does rule, he bends his brows,
He makes us all agast;*
After the few hours that we stay here,
Venus will rule at last.

Farewell, farewell, brave gentles all,
That herein do remain,
I wish you health and happiness
Till we return again.

[*Exeunt.*"

The manuscript from which the above was copied was transcribed from *a very old one*, by Mr. William Henderson, Jun., of Papa Stour, in Zetland. Mr. Henderson's copy is not dated, but bears his own signature, and, from various circumstances, it is known to have been written about the year 1788.

NOTE IX., p. 216.—THE DWARFIE STONE.

This is one of the wonders of the Orkney Islands, though it has been rather undervalued by their late historian, Mr. Barry. The island of Hoy rises abruptly, starting as it were out of the sea, which is contrary to the gentle and flat character of the other Isles of Orkney. It consists of a mountain, having different eminences or peaks. It is very steep, furrowed with ravines, and placed so as to catch the mists of the Western Ocean, and has a noble and picturesque effect from all points of view. The highest peak is divided from another eminence, called the Wardhill, by a long swampy valley full of peat-bogs. Upon the slope of this last hill, and just where the principal mountain of Hoy opens in a hollow swamp, or corrie, lies what is called the Dwarfie Stone. It is a great fragment of sandstone, composing one solid mass, which has long since been detached from a belt of the same materials, cresting the eminence above the spot where it now lies, and which has slid down till it reached its present situation. The rock is about seven feet high, twenty-two feet long, and seventeen feet broad. The upper end of it is hollowed by iron tools, of which the marks are evident, into a sort of apartment, containing two beds of stone, with a passage between them. The uppermost and largest bed is five feet eight inches long, by two feet broad, which was supposed to be used by the dwarf himself; the lower couch is shorter, and rounded off, instead of being squared at the corners. There is an entrance of about three feet and a half square, and a stone lies before it calculated to fit the

* *Agast*—so spelt in MS.

opening. A sort of skylight window gives light to the apartment. We can only guess at the purpose of this monument, and different ideas have been suggested. Some have supposed it the work of some travelling mason; but the *cui bono* would remain to be accounted for. The Rev. Mr. Barry conjectures it to be a hermit's cell; but it displays no symbol of Christianity, and the door opens to the westward. The Orcadian traditions allege the work to be that of a dwarf, to whom they ascribe supernatural powers, and a malevolent disposition, the attributes of that race in Norse mythology. Whoever inhabited this singular den certainly enjoyed

"Pillow cold, and sheets not warm."

I observed, that commencing just opposite to the Dwarfie Stone, and extending in a line to the sea-beach, there are a number of small barrows, or cairns, which seem to connect the stone with a very large cairn where we landed. This curious monument may therefore have been intended as a temple of some kind to the Northern Dii Manes, to which the cairns might direct worshippers.

NOTE X., p. 217.—CARBUNCLE ON THE WARD-HILL.

"At the west end of this stone (*i.e.* the Dwarfie Stone) stands an exceeding high mountain of a steep ascent, called the Ward-hill of Hoy, near the top of which, in the months of May, June, and July, about midnight, is seen something that shines and sparkles admirably, and which is often seen a great way off. It hath shined more brightly before than it does now, and though many have climbed up the hill, and attempted to search for it, yet they could find nothing. The vulgar talk of it as some enchanted carbuncle, but I take it rather to be some water sliding down the face of a smooth rock, which, when the sun, at such a time, shines upon, the reflection causeth that admirable splendour."—DR. WALLACE'S *Description of the Islands of Orkney*, 12mo, 1700, p. 52.

NOTE XI., p. 242.—FORTUNE-TELLING RHYMES.

The author has in the preceding chapter supposed that a very ancient northern custom, used by those who were accounted soothsaying women, might have survived, though in jest rather than earnest, among the Zetlanders, their descendants. The following original account of such a scene will show the ancient importance and consequence of such a prophetic character as was assumed by Norna:—

"There lived in the same territory (Greenland) a woman named Thorbiorga, who was a prophetess, and called the little Vola, (or fatal sister,) the only one of nine sisters who survived. Thorbiorga during the winter used to frequent the festivities of the season, invited by those who were desirous of learning their own fortune, and the future events which impended. Torquil being a man of consequence in the country, it fell to his lot to enquire how long the dearth was to endure with which the country was then afflicted; he therefore invited the prophetess to his house, having made liberal preparation, as was the custom, for receiving a guest of such consequence. The seat of the soothsayer was placed in an eminent situation, and covered with pillows filled with the softest eider down. In the evening she arrived, together with a person who had been sent to meet her, and show her the way to Torquil's habitation. She was attired as follows: She had a sky-blue tunic, having the front ornamented with gems from the top to the bottom, and wore around her throat a necklace of glass beads.* Her head-gear was of black lambskin, the lining being the fur of a white wild-cat. She leant on a staff, having a ball at the top.† The staff was ornamented with brass, and the ball or globe with gems or pebbles. She wore a Hunland (or Hungarian) girdle, to which was attached a large pouch, in which she kept her magical implements. Her shoes were of sealskin, dressed with the hair outside, and secured by long and

* We may suppose the beads to have been of the potent adderstone, to which so many virtues were ascribed.

† Like those anciently borne by porters at the gates of distinguished persons, as a badge of office.

thick straps, fastened by brazen clasps. She wore gloves of the wild-cat's skin, with the fur inmost. As this venerable person entered the hall, all saluted her with due respect; but she only returned the compliments of such as were agreeable to her. Torquil conducted her with reverence to the seat prepared for her, and requested she would purify the apartment and company assembled, by casting her eyes over them. She was by no means sparing of her words. The table being at length covered, such viands were placed before Thorbiorga as suited her character of a soothsayer. These were, a preparation of goat's milk, and a mess composed of the hearts of various animals; the prophetess made use of a brazen spoon, and a pointless knife, the handle of which was composed of a whale's tooth, and ornamented with two rings of brass. The table being removed, Torquil addressed Thorbiorga, requesting her opinion of his house and guests, at the same time intimating the subjects on which he and the company were desirous to consult her.

"Thorbiorga replied, it was impossible for her to answer their enquiries until she had slept a night under his roof. The next morning, therefore, the magical apparatus necessary for her purpose was prepared, and she then enquired, as a necessary part of the ceremony, whether there was any female present who could sing a magical song called '*Vardlokur*.' When no songstress such as she desired could be found, Gudrida, the daughter of Torquil, replied, 'I am no sorceress or soothsayer; but my nurse, Haldisa, taught me, when in Iceland, a song called *Vardlokur*.'—'Then thou knowest more than I was aware of,' said Torquil. 'But as I am a Christian,' continued Gudrida, 'I consider these rites as matters which it is unlawful to promote, and the song itself as unlawful.'—'Nevertheless,' answered the soothsayer, 'thou mayest help us in this matter without any harm to thy religion, since the task will remain with Torquil to provide everything necessary for the present purpose.' Torquil also earnestly entreated Gudrida, till she consented to grant his request. The females then surrounded Thorbiorga, who took her place on a sort of elevated stage; Gudrida then sang the magic song, with a voice so sweet and tuneful, as to excel anything that had been heard by any present. The soothsayer, delighted with the melody, returned thanks to the singer, and then said, 'Much I have now learned of dearth and disease approaching the country, and many things are now clear to me which before were hidden as well from me as others. Our present dearth of substance shall not long endure for the present, and plenty will in the spring succeed to scarcity. The contagious diseases also, with which the country has been for some time afflicted, will in a short time take their departure. To thee, Gudrida, I can, in recompense for thy assistance on this occasion, announce a fortune of higher import than any one could have conjectured. You shall be married to a man of name here in Greenland; but you shall not long enjoy that union, for your fate recalls you to Iceland, where you shall become the mother of a numerous and honourable family, which shall be enlightened by a luminous ray of good fortune. So, my daughter, wishing thee health, I bid thee farewell.' The prophetess, having afterwards given answers to all queries which were put to her, either by Torquil or his guests, departed to show her skill at another festival, to which she had been invited for that purpose. But all which she had presaged, either concerning the public or individuals, came truly to pass."

The above narrative is taken from the Saga of Erick Randa, as quoted by the learned Bartholine in his curious work. He mentions similar instances, particularly of one Heida, celebrated for her predictions, who attended festivals for the purpose, as a modern Scotsman might say, of *spacing* fortunes, with a gallant *tail*, or retinue, of thirty male and fifteen female attendants.—See *De Causis Contemptæ a Danis adhuc gentilibus Mortis, lib. III., cap.* 4.

Note XII., p. 253.—Promise of Odin.

Although the Father of Scandinavian mythology has been as a deity long forgotten in the archipelago, which was once a very small part of his realm, yet

even at this day his name continues to be occasionally attested as security for a promise.

It is curious to observe, that the rites with which such attestations are still made in Orkney correspond to those of the ancient Northmen. It appears from several authorities, that in the Norse ritual, when an oath was imposed, he by whom it was pledged passed his hand, while pronouncing it, through a massive ring of silver kept for that purpose.* In like manner, two persons, generally lovers, desirous to take the promise of Odin, which they considered as peculiarly binding, joined hands through a circular hole in a sacrificial stone, which lies in the Orcadian Stonehenge, called the Circle of Stennis, of which we shall speak more hereafter. The ceremony is now confined to the troth-plighting of the lower classes, but at an earlier period may be supposed to have influenced a character like Minna in the higher ranks.

Note XIII., p. 302.—The Pictish Burgh.

The Pictish Burgh, a fort which Norna is supposed to have converted into her dwelling-house, has been fully described in the Notes upon Ivanhoe, vol. xvii., p. 335, of this edition. An account of the celebrated Castle of Mousa is there given, to afford an opportunity of comparing it with the Saxon Castle of Coningsburgh. It should, however, have been mentioned, that the Castle of Mousa underwent considerable repairs at a comparatively recent period. Accordingly, Torfæus assures us, that even this ancient pigeon-house, composed of dry stones, was fortification enough, not indeed to hold out a ten years' siege, like Troy in similar circumstances, but to wear out the patience of the besiegers. Erland, the son of Harold the Fair-spoken, had carried off a beautiful woman, the mother of a Norwegian earl, also called Harold, and sheltered himself with his fair prize in the Castle of Mousa. Earl Harold followed with an army, and, finding the place too strong for assault, endeavoured to reduce it by famine; but such was the length of the siege, that the offended Earl found it necessary to listen to a treaty of accommodation, and agreed that his mother's honour should be restored by marriage. This transaction took place in the beginning of the thirteenth century, in the reign of William the Lion of Scotland.† It is probable that the improvements adopted by Erland on this occasion were those which finished the parapet of the castle, by making it project outwards, so that the tower of Mousa rather resembles the figure of a dice-box, whereas others of the same kind have the form of a truncated cone. It is easy to see how the projection of the highest parapet would render the defence more easy and effectual.

Note XIV., p. 332.—Antique Coins found in Zetland.

While these sheets were passing through the press, I received a letter from an honourable and learned friend, containing the following passage, relating to a discovery in Zetland: "Within a few weeks, the workmen taking up the foundation of an old wall came on a hearthstone, under which they found a horn, surrounded by massive silver rings, like bracelets, and filled with coins of the Heptarchy, in perfect preservation. The place of finding is within a very short distance of the [supposed] residence of Norna of the Fitful Head." Thus one of the very improbable fictions of the tale is verified by a singular coincidence.

Note XV., p. 372.—Character of Norna.

The character of Norna is meant to be an instance of that singular kind of insanity, during which the patient, while she or he retains much subtlety and address for the power of imposing upon others, is still more ingenious in endeavouring to impose upon themselves. Indeed, maniacs of this kind may be often observed to possess a sort of double character, in one of which they are the being whom their distempered imagination shapes out, and in the other, their own

* See the Eyrbiggia Saga. † See Torfæi Orcadus, p. 131.

natural self, as seen to exist by other people. This species of double consciousness makes wild work with the patient's imagination, and, judiciously used, is perhaps a frequent means of restoring sanity of intellect. Exterior circumstances, striking the senses, often have a powerful effect in undermining or battering the airy castles which the disorder has excited.

A late medical gentleman, my particular friend, told me the case of a lunatic patient confined in the Edinburgh Infirmary. He was so far happy that his mental alienation was of a gay and pleasant character, giving a kind of joyous explanation to all that came in contact with him. He considered the large house, numerous servants, etc., of the hospital, as all matters of state and consequence belonging to his own personal establishment, and had no doubt of his own wealth and grandeur. One thing alone puzzled this man of wealth. Although he was provided with a first-rate cook and proper assistants, although his table was regularly supplied with every delicacy of the season, yet he confessed to my friend, that by some uncommon depravity of the palate everything which he ate *tasted of porridge*. This peculiarity, of course, arose from the poor man being fed upon nothing else, and because his stomach was not so easily deceived as his other senses.

Note XVI., p. 373.—Birds of Prey.

So favourable a retreat does the island of Hoy afford for birds of prey, that instances of their ravages, which seldom occur in other parts of the country, are not unusual there. An individual was living in Orkney not long since, whom, while a child in its swaddling clothes, an eagle actually transported to its nest in the hill of Hoy. Happily, the eyry being known, and the bird instantly pursued, the child was found uninjured, playing with the young eagles. A story of a more ludicrous transportation was told me by the reverend clergyman who is minister of the island. Hearing one day a strange grunting, he suspected his servants had permitted a sow and pigs, which were tenants of his farmyard, to get among his barley crop. Having in vain looked for the transgressors upon solid earth, he at length cast his eyes upward, when he discovered one of the litter in the talons of a large eagle, which was soaring away with the unfortunate pig (squeaking all the while with terror) towards her nest in the crest of Hoy.

Note XVII., p. 429.—The Standing Stones of Stennis.

The Standing Stones of Stennis, as by a little pleonasm this remarkable monument is termed, furnishes an irresistible refutation of the opinion of such antiquaries as hold that the circles usually called Druidical were peculiar to that race of priests. There is every reason to believe, that the custom was as prevalent in Scandinavia as in Gaul or Britain, and as common to the mythology of Odin as to Druidical superstition. There is even reason to think that the Druids never occupied any part of the Orkneys, and tradition, as well as history, ascribes the Stones of Stennis to the Scandinavians. Two large sheets of water, communicating with the sea, are connected by a causeway, with openings permitting the tide to rise and recede, which is called the Bridge of Broisgar. Upon the Eastern tongue of land appear the Standing Stones, arranged in the form of a half circle, or rather a horseshoe, the height of the pillars being fifteen feet and upwards. Within this circle lies a stone, probably sacrificial. One of the pillars, a little to the westward, is perforated with a circular hole, through which loving couples are wont to join hands when they take the *Promise of Odin*, as has been repeatedly mentioned in the text. The enclosure is surrounded by barrows, and on the opposite isthmus, advancing towards the Bridge of Broisgar, there is another monument of Standing Stones, which, in this case, is completely circular. They are less in size than those on the eastern side of the lake, their height running only from ten or twelve to fourteen feet. This western circle is surrounded by a deep trench drawn on

the outside of the pillars; and I remarked four tumuli, or mounds of earth, regularly disposed around it. Stonehenge excels this Orcadian monument; but that of Stennis is, I conceive, the only one in Britain which can be said to approach it in consequence. All the northern nations marked by those huge enclosures the places of popular meeting, either for religious worship or the transaction of public business of a temporal nature. The *Northern Popular Antiquities* contain, in an abstract of the Eyrbiggia Saga, a particular account of the manner in which the Helga Fels, or Holy Rock, was set apart by the Pontiff Thorolf for solemn occasions.

I need only add, that, different from the monument on Salisbury Plain, the stones which were used in the Orcadian circle seemed to have been raised from a quarry upon the spot, of which the marks are visible.